

KONKO-KYO

A SECT OF MODERN SHINTOISM

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## KONKO-KYO

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## PREFACE

Konko-kyo is one of the comparatively modern sects of Shinto, the ancient religion of Japan. Shinto may be broadly divided into two compartments. These are Shrine Shinto, which is the Government cult, and Church Shinto. If this distinction is kept in mind by the student of Shinto a part of the difficulty in answering the question as to just what, after all, Shinto is, will be eliminated. Most of the material available in English for the student of Shinto relates to the subject in general and to the first of the two above mentioned divisions, that is, to the phase of Shinto which is the National Cult of Japan, or what has been called Shrine Shinto. Of Church Shinto there are thirteen sects or denominations. These are:

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. Taisha | 7. Kurozumi |
| 2. Mitake | 8. Konko    |
| 3. Fuso   | 9. Shinri   |
| 4. Shusei | 10. Tenri   |
| 5. Taisei | 11. Misogi  |
| 6. Jikko  | 12. Shinshu |
|           | 13. Shindo  |

Of these the first six named had their origin in Shrine Shinto growing out of the worship of already established individual shrines. The others sprang up spontaneously each by its own inherent faith and teaching. Of these thirteen

denominations, each of six, namely Jikko, Kurozumi, Shinri, Tenri, Misogi and Konko points back to a specific man whom it claims as its founder. It is with but one of these sects, Konko-kyo, that the following discussion has to do.

The frequently heard discussion as to whether Shinto is truly a religion, and the position taken by some that it is not a religion, loses its force when the subject is viewed as a <sup>w</sup>shol<sup>e</sup>w and not merely in its aspect as a national trait. Whatever may be the character of Shinto from the official point of view, and even though it might be admitted that in the minds of a limited number of people, particularly of the most highly educated class, Shrine Shinto is only organized and directed patriotism, it must at the same time be admitted that, for the great mass of the people of Japan, even Shrine Shinto, and certainly without any question Church Shinto, is a religion. For many it is part of their religion; for many it is their religion. This position will be substantiated as we proceed with the inspection of one of the sects of Shinto.

In order that this discussion of Konko-kyo may be something more than a theoretical and abstract treatment, it is the writer's purpose to give to the philosophical and theological tenets a concrete, and if possible a living body, by describing it in its historical setting and in its organic structure. It is hoped that such a skeleton will give definiteness and tangibleness to our knowledge of the subject, which might otherwise be vaguely ethereal.

## SECTION I

### A Description of Konko-kyo

#### A. Historical Sketch

The home of Konko-kyo is a village called Otani in Asakuchi-gun, Okayama-ken. In this little village the sect had its birth and early development, and from its headquarters there it has carried on ever since. Near this village at a place called Urami Mura the founder, known as Konko-daijin, was born on the sixteenth day of the eighth month of the eleventh year of Bunkwa (1814). His father, Kandori Juhei, was a farmer, and the son took up his father's occupation and continued it until middle life, when at the age of forty-five he began his teaching. At the age of twenty-three he married a farmer's daughter, and lived thereafter the normal life of a farmer. They had seven children, five sons and two daughters. Of these, the two daughters are still living, the younger in Fukuyama and the older in Konko village.

It is recorded of Konko-daijin that he was always exceptionally sincere, polite, filial to his parents, and deep in matters of faith. He did things out of the fullness of his sincere heart for men and for the world, not out of a weary sense of duty. From the time he reached manhood his family was visited with a series of disasters, and finally he himself contracted a serious illness.



At that time Japan lay under the spell of certain superstitions such as belief in the sexagenary cycle, lucky and unlucky days, good or bad according to the horoscope, the curse of the Konko God etc. Now the family of Konko-daijin considered that the succession of disasters which befell the family must be the curse of the Konko God. Konko-daijin himself, although it is emphatically stated of him that he did not believe in these ancient superstitions, at that time believed that the family was right in attributing their misfortunes to the curse of the Konko God. In this belief he entered with a deeper reverence into the service of the God. He entered this service not in a spirit of fear, but of complete trust, seeking the help and salvation of the God the more earnestly as the family misfortunes increased.

As the result of these years of wholehearted sincerity and devotion his eyes were finally opened, and he became possessed of the virtue of the Father God, who is not the so-called Konko-God, but who is the true existence of Heaven and Earth. So on the twenty-first day of the tenth month of the sixth year of Ansei (1859) he received an oracle from Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami (the God of brightness of Heaven and Earth) in which he was requested to lend the God a helping hand in bringing relief to the suffering world.

Thereupon Konko-daijin abandoned his agricultural business, leaving it to his heir, and took up his residence at the foot of Yasuki hill, the "very presence" of God, and

there, from that time until his death, continued to serve the "God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth." It is said that all of that time, more than twenty-five years, he never went a single step outside of his own gate. He never went out to teach nor sought pupils. Quietly remaining at home he imparted his teachings to all who came to him. The number of those who came for instruction continually increased, the only advertisement being the satisfied customer. Those who accepted the faith which he taught directed others to him. Soon among those who became his followers there appeared many who took upon themselves, out of their own enthusiasm and devotion to the "way," the task of propagating the teaching in different localities. As a result, during the lifetime of Konko-daijin, there were followers as far south as Yamaguchi Province, as far east as Kyoto and all through the island of Shikoku. In Osaka a group of believers was holding meetings. So, at the time of his death, on the tenth day of the tenth month of the sixteenth year of Meiji (1883), Konko-daijin had a large following of people who revered him and believed in his teachings. However there had been effected no organization of any kind. He had written nothing by his own hand, but his teachings had been transmitted to disciples who had recorded them. Just how accurate these records are, of course, we cannot tell, but they are probably substantially correct.



After he had received the oracle from Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami for the establishing of the Konko religion, the founder met with some difficulties which are of interest. In the first place, to furnish a way of presenting his message he secured permission of the head of the Department of Religion to establish a shrine. But this did not clear the road of difficulty. He soon met opposition due to one of his divine instructions. In this instruction he made light of a certain teaching contained in the calendar regarding lucky and unlucky days. Such an instruction would not seem fraught with possibilities of making trouble but calendar specialists thought it a menace to the national constitution, and the established order of society. They continued to make trouble on these grounds until, in Meiji 6th (1873), an edict changed the calendar. Then too, in the fifth year of Meiji (1872) a change in governmental regulations deprived the founder of his position as chief priest of this shrine. For ten years after sixth of Meiji he had to go without this valuable asset. It would have been possible for him to have acquired from the government recognition as a "teacher of religion" but he never applied for this privilege, though many friends urged him to do so. He preferred to go on quietly in a private capacity passing on his message concerning the "Great Reason of Heaven and Earth" to those who came to him. Saying "I need not any official name given by men," he continued preaching and teaching and saying that even

though he should die the "Way" would not be done away with. And the faith did not die with the teacher. On the second day of the sixth month of the eighteenth year of Meiji (1885) some of the direct descendants of the teacher and a few of the first believers assembled to discuss matters and at that time took the preliminary step toward the organization of a Konko Shinto Church under the jurisdiction of the Department of Shinto of the Government (Shinto Honkyoku). A committee of three was appointed to take up the matter with the Shinto Honkyoku, which they did immediately, with the result that recognition was secured for the establishment of a Shinto Konko-Kyo at Okayama-ken, Asakuchi-gun, Otani-mura. This church remained under the Shinto Honkyoku until Meiji 33 (1900) when on account of its prosperity and wide influence it was given standing as an independent sect with the name Konko-kyo.

The three men who went to Tokyo and secured the recognition of the Shinto Honkyoku for the establishment of the church were Kondo Fujimori, Shirakami Nobujiro (afterwards named Shinichiro after his father, who was the leader of the group of believers in Osaka mentioned above), and Sato Norio, who is now head of the Middle School conducted by the sect at the headquarters in Okayama-ken. The latter is the only living member of the trio who played so important a part in the organization of the church, and is one of its leading spirits today.

## B. Business Organization and Methods

The organization is shaped after the pattern of a parliamentary institution and all business is carried on under prescribed rules and regulations. The headquarters, both spiritually and temporarily, is at the village of Otani in Okayama Prefecture mentioned as the birthplace of the founder, and the place where he carried on his teaching. For some time the house in which the founder carried on his work was used as the meeting place of the believers. Later the original house was torn down and another erected on the same spot, though not quite as large, as can be seen by the fact that the well, which was under the roof of the original house is several feet outside the latter one. The later building still stands and is highly prized as the first real meeting place of the sect, and specially held sacred because it stands on the very spot where the revered founder served in the "very presence" of the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth. The Church now owns an immense tract of land around this original plot. Within the compound are erected the head church (or Mother Church), an immense lecture hall, the theological seminary or training school, the Middle School, and the main business office of the sect.

From this office the business is carried on through branch offices throughout the country. For purposes of propagation the country is divided into fifteen districts, according to topography and convenience. Each district has a



branch office. In Korea there are also several branch offices and one general propagation office. In Tokyo there is a branch office from which the evangelization of Tokyo is supervised. All these branch offices, of course, are supervised from the main office at headquarters. The temporal head of the church, called the Kwan cho, of course lives at headquarters. All expenses of the organization are met by voluntary contributions from believers, collected by local churches and sent in to the main office especially at the time of the spring and autumn festivals. (A fuller description of the external organization will be found in Section II.)

The present strength of the sect can be judged fairly well by the following facts. There are now seven hundred and seventy churches throughout the country and Korea, each with a resident teacher. The followers are divided into three groups: Kyoto (pure members), of which there are about 58,936; Shinto (associate members) about 512,596; Kyudosha (inquirers) of which they claim 2,000,000, making a total of 2,571,532. These are scattered throughout Japan, Korea, Saghalien and the region extending from Kwantung province to China. Since no form of registration of members is required the above figures cannot be verified, but they represent the official claim of the church.

The clergy of the church is composed of Senkyoshi and Kyoshi. The duty of the former, of whom there are sixteen, is to travel about conducting special meetings and preaching

services. Of the latter there are a few less than sixteen hundred. They are regularly installed pastors of the churches. To call them teachers would be a more accurate rendering of their title. The word church is used here in accordance with the preference of the leaders of the faith. They do not call their places of worship shrines. They call them churches.

The spiritual head of the church is called "Daikyoshu" which is probably best translated "High Priest," He is head teacher or superintendant of the Mother Church and enjoys the highest honor and rank in the religion. He must be chosen from among the teachers who are of the geneological line of the founder. The present Daikyoshu is a son of a son of Konko-Dai-jin. His power is purely spiritual, all temporal authority being invested in the Kwancho, and a congress representing the whole body of the clergy. His spiritual position is extremely elevated. Prayers of believers are sometimes addressed directly to him as to a God, although theoretically he is merely in very close touch with the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth, and with the Man-God Konko-daijin, by reason of his direct descent from the latter. The above probably states the case too mildly as one of the leading theologians of the sect says that the Grand-Teacher or High Priest is "worshipped by all believers as a living God."

The teachers (Kyoshi) all receive their training at the seminary (Konko-kyo Kyogi-kokyusho) which is located in close proximity to the Mother Church. In the same compound

is a "Devotional Hall" for purpose of devotional training. Every applicant for recognition as teacher in the church must go through a definite period of devotional training in this hall. Further any teacher may go there for further devotional training. According to the same authority referred to above, who is now principle of the middle school and acquainted with all the educational work, 150 Seminary graduates pass out every year in two sections, one every six months, each section having about 75 men. After making allowance for deaths and demitances there would be about 100 additional teachers in the church each year.

The only other educational institution conducted by Konko-kyo is a Middle School, which also is located in the same compound with Mother Church and the Seminary. This school has thirty teachers and 700 students. It is supported by tuition fees and a grant from the general office. While there is no denominational teaching in the school curriculum it undoubtedly is good propaganda as it brings hundreds of boys of the most impressionable age into close touch with the Mother Church and the theological training school.

Other means of propagation are a Young Men's Konko Association (Konko-kyo Seinenkwai), a Women's Association and other societies, all consisting of members of the Konko Church, and endeavoring to cultivate the faith and engaging to some extent in social work.



The only periodical of the church is a small magazine called Konko-kyoto, issued three times a month by the Konko Kyoto-sha in the Konko Village. This is supported by subscriptions and advertisements. It is not an official publication.

### C. Ceremonies and Worship

Some churches have a daily service at which there is a sermon by the Kyoshi, and prayers repeated in unison by those in attendance. Such services are uncereimonial and may not be held, according to the enthusiasm of the Kyoshi or the local conditions.

In all churches there is a monthly service which is more ceremonial than the daily service. For this the Kyoshi wears ceremonial dress and conducts the entire service, the attending people taking no part except that of listening.

The great festivals of the Konko Church are at the present time two in number, one in the spring on April seventh and tenth, and one in autumn on October seventh and tenth. The second day is in both cases practically a repetition of the first day, and is held for the purpose of dividing the crowd of people who attend into two groups, thus avoiding the inconveniences of too great a crowd. For the same reason the church authorities are now seriously considering the advisability of increasing the present number of festival days. This change may go into effect this year. The

crowds are now so great that the Mother Church and the village cannot accommodate them. At the last one on October 10th there were probably above 20,000 in attendance. These festivals are always held at the Grand Church and are very similar in form if they do differ slightly from year to year in substance. They are ceremonial to an extreme.

A rather detailed description of one of these services may help to formulate in the minds of those who have not seen a Shinto festival a more or less accurate picture of the ceremony. By the kindness of the authorities the writer was permitted to view the whole service from a position in the church close to the "Holy of Holies," from a place, in fact, into which none of the laity are admitted and into which only those of the clergy who perform the service are admitted to enter. From this position he could see the performance of the service more advantageously than perhaps any of the thousands of people gathered outside had ever seen it. The lay worshippers do not enter the church but stand or sit on the ground in the large enclosure at the front and sides of the building. Their part in the service is chiefly to listen reverently while the ritual is performed by the clergy. The only exception to this is the first rather long prayer repeated in unison by all.

The church building has three main divisions. The front division comprises the great part of the building. The next division is much smaller and is slightly raised above

the level of the first. The third division is still smaller and is separated from the rest of the building by two heavy doors. Within this division is the shrine of the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth. This is the "Holy of Holies."

During the festival ceremony, as mentioned previously, the people are all on the outside of the building. The front division of the interior is filled with the Kyoshi who have come from the widely scattered churches to participate in the event. The second division has in it an orchestra which renders the sacred music required in certain parts of the service, and the clergy who conduct the service. The third division contains only the spirits of the founder-God and of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami, the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth.

At the proper time for the opening of the service the orchestra began playing a selection, during the rendering of which the officiating clergy seated themselves, with much ceremony and precision, in two parallel rows a few feet apart and facing each other. The space between these two rows formed a passage way from the front of the platform to the doors of the "Holy of Holies." When all were seated the music ceased and two officials opened the large doors of the Holy place and the "Great Purifying Service" (O Harai) began. The purpose of the purifying service is to fit the participants for the sacred service which is to follow, in which the doors of the shrine are opened and the presence of God made very



real. This purifying service consisted chiefly in repetition in chorus of a long prayer and the waving of the gohei over the heads of the participants. With regard to the first of these two items, it is about the only active part taken by the congregation. In this not only the several hundred clergymen occupying the first section of the church, but also the thousands of worshippers gathered outside joined with the officiating clergy. This prayer was repeated slowly by all, the words being broken up into syllables so that there was good rhythm and harmony throughout. The prayer was as follows:

The Great Gods of Haraido born at the time of purification in the river at Ahagihara of Tachibananoodo in the province of Hyuga, Kyushu, which was conducted by Izanagi-no-mi-koto, the father of Emperors under the decree of Kamurogi and Kamuromi who reside in the "Heavenly Fields Above" together with the Heavenly Gods, and with the myriads of deities, hear attentively what we pray with all reverence, for the purification and cleansing of all our wrongs and sins.

By the decree of Kamurogi and Kamuromi, the Parent-Gods who reside in the "Heavenly Fields Above," myriads of deities were convened and consulted, and the land blessed with rice was entrusted to the Emperor (Ninigi-no-mi-koto) to reign over it peacefully, to be a peaceful country. In the land thus entrusted to him there

were evil deities; and after talking it over with the Gods he swept them away, and the murmuring of noisy rocks and stumps and even blades of grass were stopped. Being thus entrusted he was sent down from his heavenly place, making his way with dignity through thickly rolled clouds.

Yamato, the Sun-High-Country, situated in the centre of all countries of the land entrusted to him, was made a peaceful country. Upon a firmly established rock was built the beautiful palace of the Emperor, its pillars standing large and strong, and its cross-beams on the roof pointing heavenwards. There he took up his shelter from the heavens and from the sun. In the land which is to be reigned over peacefully as a peaceful country there are various kinds of sins committed by the ever-growing population given birth to by heaven, which are heavenly sins, namely, the breaking down of rice-field ridges, damming up irrigation ditches, stopping up rice-field water junctions, double-sewing another man's rice-field (cf. tares among the wheat), driving concealed stakes in rice-fields, flaying animals alive, flaying from the heel to head, evacuating in living rooms.

The following earthly sins: to cut the skin of a man dead or alive, to be born with white skin, to be a leper, to violate one's mother, to violate one's offspring, to violate a girl and her mother, to violate a mother and

her daughter, to copulate with animals, to suffer from the visitation of creeping reptiles, to suffer a visitation from heavenly deities (e.g. the god of thunder), to suffer torment from the fowls of the air, to kill domestic animals, to curse a person.

Following the recital of the heavenly and earthly sins, purification from the same is petitioned for and received.

After the prayer an official took the gohei which was standing before the shrine, and walked about among the clergy, and here and there waving it over their heads, and then waved it in several directions towards the congregation outside. This is symbolical of the remission of their sins, or their purification. This gohei was then taken away from the building. Thus purified, clergy and laity were ready for the sacred service in the very presence of the Founder-God and the Father-God.

The music was resumed and one of the officials of highest rank proceeded with much ceremony to enter the "Holy of Holies." He went to the further extremity of this place where is situated the shrine of the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth, and slowly opened the doors. These doors, two in number, are large and heavy, and purposely constructed so that they make a weird squeaking sound as they slowly open. It is possible that this noise is partly made by some other instrument operated by an assistant behind the shrine. This



is only a surmise and may or may not be correct. At any rate it is supposed to be made by the opening of the doors of the sacred shrine and is supposed to help to create the proper atmosphere for the appreciation of the presence of the God signified by the opening of the shrine doors.

After the opening of the doors, followed the offering of foods to the God. It was a sumptuous feast, being as follows:

1. Two large silver bowls of sake (Japan's national drink).
2. Two large rice cakes, about a foot in diameter, followed by two more.
3. Two large artistically arranged sea-bream.
4. One sawara (a kind of fish, *Cybius nipponium*).
5. A dish of lobsters.
6. Another fish, this time a black bream.
7. Wild ducks.
8. Miso (a common Japanese food made of beans), and pickles.
9. Sea-weed and dried fish (bonito).
10. Fu (a kind of bread made of wheat gluten).
11. Mushrooms.
12. Green vegetables.
13. Fruits.
14. Fruits and nuts.
15. Cakes.

16. Manju (a kind of bun with sweet bean paste inserted in it).

These sixteen courses were brought separately from a nearby building by a servant, and passed one by one up the line of officiating priests, whose mouths were covered so as to prevent contamination of the offerings. The last official placed them before the shrine one by one as they reached him. This was accompanied by music and much ceremony, and required a considerable length of time. When the sixteen courses had been served the officials removed their masks and returned to their former places and sat down.

The next item was the dedication of the gohei. The gohei is a strip of paper cut in a certain way and is always to be seen in front of or inside Shinto shrines. It has the significance of an offering, and originally was intended to represent the offerings of cloth anciently made to shrines. These gohei sometimes hang on a piece of cord or rope and often are tied on to the end of a stick and erected before the shrine. The gohei used in this service was fastened on to sticks which were placed upright in a stand kept for the purpose. The gohei was presented before the shrine, and dedicated and then was made to take the place of the one which had been used in the purifying service. That one had been taken away and not again returned. The symbolism in this transaction is evident and needs no comment. It reminds one of the scapegoat of ancient Israel. The new pure one

was placed in the holder and there it will remain until it is used in the next purifying service.

The next was the congratulatory address and offering of branches *Eurya Ochnacea* by the Kwan-cho (temporal head of the church). During this offering the congregation participated by bowing and clapping their hands at the proper moments.

These branches used in offerings usually have some gohei ties around the stem. They are called tama-gushi.

The offering by the Kwan-cho was followed by similar offerings by the heads of various organizations. On the seventh of October the representatives of (a) the Faculty of the School of Doctrines, (b) the Trustees' fund-raising organization for propagation and educational purposes, and (c) the Konko Young Men's Association made offerings of tamaguchi. On the tenth such offerings were made by representatives of the members of the Congress and of the faculty of the Middle School. In this respect alone did the services of the seventh and tenth differ.

At the conclusion of these offerings all of the congregation present worshipped together clapping the hands and bowing down.

This was followed by the sacred "kibi" dance performed by a group of girls about eleven or thirteen years of age, all daughters of Konko-kyo members.

The programme concluded by music during the rendering of which the clergy left the building.

The description has thus far dealt with the forms of public worship. The question arises as to what forms worship takes in the case of individuals when not in attendance at any of these public services. Members may go and do go, to the church at any time and offer up their private worship without any service being held and without the presence of the Kyoshi. The form in which they worship varies slightly with individuals and occasions. Sometimes the worshipper enters the church, faces in the direction of the shrine, or Dai-kyoshu (High Priest) and either standing or squatting in regular Japanese fashion, offers his prayer. The Dai-kyoshu sits from morning till night on a mat a little in front of and to one side of the shrine and is often worshipped directly. The prayer is always with bowed head and is preceded and followed by the hand-clapping which is characteristic of all Shinto prayers. The number of claps, although definitely prescribed in ceremonial services is not determined for private individual worship. However the usual number of claps is three, before and after prayer. Since this is not prescribed it naturally varies slightly, but is probably never less than two, and seldom more than four.

Again the worshipper often goes as far as the entrance to the church and there performs his worship. Or, he sometimes goes only as far as the gate leading into the enclosure, worships and goes on his way, to his business or elsewhere.



The length of time varies between the time which it takes to bow the head slowly, and raise it again, and several minutes, according to the piety of the worshipper, or the time at his disposal.

Then also there is the home worship. Every Konko-kyo believer's home has, in common with all Shinto believer's homes, a god-shelf. Usually such a god-shelf has upon it some ancestral tablets and one or more physical representations of the God or gods especially worshipped at that home.

In a Konko-kyo home, however, the god-shelf has upon it only some ancestral tablets, and a miniature empty shrine, dedicated to the spirit of the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth. This is one of the peculiarities of the sect. There are no physical representations of any kind. In the shrine of the Mother Church there is no physical emblem of the deity. There is a mat on the floor upon which the people are to imagine the God sits to hear their prayers. Not that they believe he actually sits there, but it gives something visible toward which the worship can be directed. So also in the small churches, and on the god-shelf at home. There is no physical representation of either the founder or of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. Here usually the first thing on arising in the morning, but at any time which they choose the members of the family worship in much the same way as they do as individuals in the church.

## D. Doctrinal Content

### 1. Scripture Basis

When we come to examine the teachings of the Konko-kyo we find ourselves confronted by a difficult task. Konko-daijin the founder, left no written statement of his own teachings. It is claimed however that these were dictated to disciples who recorded them accurately. At any rate there is a brief compilation of one hundred short paragraphs, many of which contain only a sentence or two, which are entitled the "Founder's Teachings." Whether he instructed his followers in any matters other than those contained in these paragraphs is of course impossible to say.

Since it is claimed that the teachings were faithfully recorded by disciples it is not likely that there was anything of importance taught which was omitted by the scribes. In these one hundred paragraphs there is some repetition and much that is of very minor importance. All of it is entirely unsystematized and scrappy.

There is a group of fifty short sayings of the founder, compiled for the help of believers; this is called "Guides to faith." These also are entirely without system or order.

Another similarly compiled group is entitled "Great Principles of the Teaching." There are twenty of these.

Another group of twelve is called "God's Commands and Precepts." So that altogether there are one hundred and eighty-two of these short, scrappy, unorganized sayings, and



precepts which comprise the scriptural basis upon which the Konko-kyo is built.

Some help can be derived from a limited number of small books and pamphlets written by leading men in the present church. Among these some of the chief ones are "Konko-kyo" and "The Great Reason of Heaven and Earth" by Mr. Norio Sato, and some brief historical sketches of the founder's life.

## 2. Theological Tenets

The God of Konko-kyo is called Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. Although this 'Kane' is written with the character which means 'metal' and regardless of what kind of an origin may be postulated for the name of this God, the phrase "God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth" seems to render the meaning which the leaders of the sect desire to have the name convey. Although there is room for speculation as to the original god or name upon which the founder built his new idea, we are more concerned to know what the idea came to be in his teaching and that of his followers who have carried onward and perhaps further developed it.

Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami is conceived of as a personal, spiritual being without beginning and without end, whose boundless virtue interpenetrates heaven and earth. Heaven and earth are manifestations of his divine virtue which he pours out upon all his creatures (Mr. Sato's "Konko-kyo," p. 11). Such stress is laid upon his spiritual nature that

the church has no images of him nor physical representation of any kind, lest the people should worship the representation rather than the God, or should conceive of him as other than a purely spiritual being. If you know this God in one place or at one time, you know him for all places and for all times, for he does not change. There is no difference in God no matter whether it is day or night, distant or near ("Konko-kyo," p. 32).

What relationship does this God bear to the universe through which his boundless virtue is manifested? While we find no record of his having created the universe, we do find distinct indications that he is responsible for its existence. He is called the "Source of our life and of this heaven and earth" ("Konko-kyo," p. 13). To say that he is the source of heaven and earth does not differ materially from saying that he is their creator. So, while no detailed description of the process is attempted, it is directly assumed that he is responsible for the existence of the world and the life that is in it. He is termed the "Parent God," and the "Parent of our true being" ("Konko-kyo," p. 13). This latter term would seem to imply creatorship rather than merely spiritual fatherhood. However, on this point there is nothing more to be said. A few scanty references such as these quoted above exhaust our information on the subject, and leave us to suppose that the founder considered the matter to be important enough only to make passing mention of, not important enough to present any developed theory.

But if there is a dearth of information about the relation of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami to the origin of the universe and life in it, his relation to them as they exist is made a subject of greater importance. His relation to the physical world is one of control for he is responsible for the supplying of men's needs in the way of food. He causes the earth to produce various things for food for his people. "Foods are what the God of heaven and earth has made and given for the life of men" ("Great Principles of the Teaching," p. 13). His power over the material world is further shown by the fact believers are taught to pray to him for crops, and other blessings, and the granting of which presupposes his control over material forces. "Men who live between heaven and earth are God's proteges; they cannot perform their family occupations in pain and sickness. Ask for your bodily health; ask out of sincerity whatever pertains to you, whether in matter of diligence in your family occupation, or success in crops, or things connected with cows and horses" (Founder's Teachings No. 51). This precept is one of the founder's teachings and is based upon the belief that it is within the power of the god to grant the blessings asked, which implies control over natural forces.

Furthermore, this God is not confined within the boundaries set by material objects or finite concepts. Being a spiritual being he pervades the universe. He is everywhere present in it, and is everywhere accessible to those who in



sincerity call upon him. Thus not only has he power over the material world but he pervades it to such an extent that in some passages of the teachings one is inclined to think that the founder did not clearly distinguish between the "God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth" and "Heaven and Earth" itself. The "God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth" is from ancient times, and is not a God like those who have once come into being; Heaven and Earth do not pass away and come to an end, for they do not pass away. So it is important to be "one in heart with heaven and earth, and the sun and moon, and blessings are before us even if we do not believe" (Founder's Teachings No. 7). "God is guardian of heaven and earth, so he cannot be separated from them" (Founder's Teachings No. 11). In these and similar passages the close connection between the God of Heaven and Earth and "heaven and earth" itself, while perhaps not amounting to identification, is at least very close and is suggestive of a tendency on the part of the founder to forget for the moment the spiritual character of the God, and identify him with the universe. Such, however, is not the central drift of the founder's teaching, which is that this God pervades the whole universe, and exercises a certain amount of control over it.

The relation of the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth to mankind is much more clearly taught than is his relation to the material universe. The latter only appears incidentally; the former is purposely taught in many of the



founder's sayings, and form a considerable part of the body of the teaching.

The term Parent-God which is applied to the God of this sect, while it seems to imply creator-ship, may also suggest the idea of spiritual fatherhood. At any rate the latter idea is taught in language which does not permit misunderstanding. In speaking of the folly and the unreasonableness of certain superstitions which are prevalent at that time, the founder says that all of that is due to "the ignorance of men of the grace of God, and the ignorance of sons of the mind of the Father" (Konko-kyo, p. 12). Or again take the following: "God is father of our real self, and faith in him is the same as filiality to our parents" (Great Principles of the Teachings No. 5). In both these passages the father and child idea is unmistakably expressed.

Now if God is the father of mankind, and if men are his children we should expect certain emotions and attentions which are in keeping with that idea. While teaching on this point, as in all others, is meager and indistinct, there is enough to indicate at least the direction of the founder's leaning. "The God of heaven and earth will take care of us in filthy places as well as in clean places" (Great Principles of the Teachings No. 7) indicates the belief that this God may be depended upon to take care of his people as the parent cares for the child. The statement quoted above that "Foods are what the God of heaven and earth has made and given for

the life of men" was cited to illustrate the belief in the God's power over material things. It also illustrates another belief, namely that he is mindful of the physical needs of men. One of the most fundamental needs of man is the need for food. The God of heaven and earth has provided for this need. The things which are used for food have been made by him and given to his children to supply this greatest of physical needs, to maintain the life of the body. It is he who gives the crops of rice and the herds of cattle. It is he who must be looked to and depended upon for the necessities of life.

Why does he look after the needs of men? The answer is to be found in the parent-child idea which was taught by the founder. Why does the earthly parent look after the bodily needs of his child? The answer is parental affection. Mr. Sato's comment's on the founder's precept "God is the parent of our true being and faith toward him is just the same as being filial toward our parents" by saying that "the parent-god pours out his blessings upon us as his worthies out of his deep heart of love, as manifested in nature by the affection of parents and children which is above all other kinds of love" ("Konko-kyo," p. 13). Such impressions are not numerous in either the founder's teachings or his disciples' commentaries, but are sufficiently clear to show a rather well defined conception of God as he who loves man, as a parent loves his child. It is, of course, through the human relationships that this conception of a loving God is arrived at.

"From the knowledge of our love of our own children, know that God protects his proteges" (Guides to faith, 30).

The teachings lay emphasis upon the omnipresence of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. This is by way of contrast to the other popular gods of the country, who are mostly conceived of as residing in the shrines in certain definite localities. Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami is not thus limited. The founder, in teaching this lesson put the matter somewhat forcefully in these words: "If God enters the shrine this world will be made dark" (Founder's teachings No. 10). This is no doubt aimed at other sects who conceive of their Gods as residing in the shrines which are erected and dedicated to them. The implied criticism is that such an idea of God is foolish. If God is limited by the walls of a shrine he can have very little connection with the world. But Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami who is the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth has no such limitations. To conceive of him as residing in a shrine would be to preclude the possibility of his shedding his light and virtue upon the whole world. Such would seem to be the mind of the founder in regard to the presence of God. He is everywhere present.

A question which presses for answer is, "what is the relation between this ever-present, spiritual, loving, Father-God whose altar is the world and the myriads of other gods that are believed in by people generally, and what attitude does Konko-kyo take toward other sects and religions?" The



founder is said to have taught the spirit of tolerance in this matter. The story is told that three believers of the Konko sect once went to the founder and began to criticize the other religions. One gave a disparaging criticism of the Kurozumi sect of Shinto, another of the Shinshu sect of Buddhism, and the third made a slurring remark about Christianity. Konko-daijin listened to all of this in silence and then prayed to Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. Then came the word of God through him saying "People come to me and talk about and criticize other sects without listening to my own teaching. Judge the matter from the standpoint of parents who have 3 children. One child becomes a Shinto priest, another becomes a Buddhist monk, and the third becomes a physician. Now if in such a case the monk speaks ill of the priest and the physician, what would the parent think of it? Buddha, Confucius, and Christ are all children of the God of Heaven and Earth. To speak ill of other sects is abhorrent to me." Thus the founder paved the way for tolerance of other religions. He made a place for the founders of all the great religions in the family of the God of Heaven and Earth. "The God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth" is not prejudiced by sects. So as you go on believing, you should not narrow your heart, but widen it. Think widely of the world for the world is within your heart" (Founder's teachings No. 9).

How far then should this broadness of mind in the matter of other Gods and religions be carried? Here the



position of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami is safeguarded. The founder said "Some say they worship all the Gods in Japan, but that is too many for you to worship. Suppose you ask one person for a thing. He will make an effort to do it for you. But if you ask many persons for the same thing you will be talking endlessly to them with little effect. So it is that when you employ carpenters, you must have one among them who is head. . . . so in worshipping God, if you worship with one heart you will soon receive blessings" (Founder's teachings No. 36). It would seem from this that the founder's tolerance would allow for recognition of other gods, but not for the worship of them. They should even be revered according to one instruction which says, "Beware of revering only the God you worship, despising other gods" (Great Principles of the Teaching No. 16). In accordance with the spirit of these and similar teachings, a priest of the highest rank, when questioned regarding the attitude of the sect toward Gods other than Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami, replied, we recognize all other gods of other religions, but worship only Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami with religious faith. An example of such recognition is seen in the long prayer used in the purification service of the great festival. The opening address of this prayer recognizes "the Great gods of Haraido . . . Izanangi-no-mikoto . . . Kamurogi and Kamuromi . . . together with the heavenly gods, and the earthly gods, and . . . a myriad deities." All of these are called upon to listen attentively to the prayer

which is to follow. From this it might seem that not only Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami, but all of these other gods as well are worshipped. That many of the worshippers during the repetition of this prayer actually do direct their worship toward these gods who are addressed in the beginning can scarcely be doubted. However, the informed Konko believer would say that this is merely a formality, and that the religious faith is directed only to Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. This formal recognition of the pantheon of Shinto deities may be largely political rather than devotional.

### 3. Anthropology

We pass from the teachings about God to the beliefs regarding man. What sort of a being is man? What is his present condition, nature, and destination? These questions are more easily asked than answered from the information obtainable from Konko sources. Man's origin is not made a matter of importance, although the sect accepts the belief that the Japanese people are descended from the Sun-Goddess, with the exception of some of the lowest strata of society, who are descended from her retainers.

Of men's relation to gods, more is told than of man's origin. This doctrine is the natural counterpart of the doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the passages quoted above to illustrate the latter subject may be referred to here as also illustrating the former. The statement that "to have

faith in god is exactly the same as being filial to one's parents" is clear and unmistakable in its implication, although the word son or child is not used. In other places, however, the word 'son' and 'father' both appear in the same sentence expressing the relationship which exists between man and God.

This child and parent relationship is seen in several other closely related teachings. For example, in the teaching of man's complete dependence on God. As the child is dependent upon the parent, so man is dependent upon God for his means of bodily sustenance. "No man of any country, great or small, high or low, can go without 'Heaven and Earth' as he comes into this world, during his lifetime or after his death when his soul goes where it is due. And but for the grace of heaven and earth and the virtue of the parent-god there is no way of obtaining even one of the necessities and sources of our sustenance" ("Konko-kyo," p. 11). Most men, however, have come to look upon all of these great blessings as matter of fact things, forgetting that they are the gifts of the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth, given for the material welfare of his children. Where there should be real gratitude and thanksgiving to the parent-god for all of these things most men add to their other sins that of unthankfulness ("Konko-kyo," pp. 13-14).

Furthermore, most people are given to thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to. "Though we are



such beings as cannot see even through a thin paper screen, yet we think we are something, forgetting our littleness, and imagining that there is nothing which we by our efforts cannot do. We blunder along doing many wilful things when we do not really know God. But when we once seriously reflect upon ourselves we come to realize that we are such weaklings that we cannot control even ourselves, and such worthless beings that we are liable to be attacked at any moment by the evil spirits lurking in our hearts. However strong and wise, however rich, we feel quite helpless if we have to live alone, and come to understand that we cannot get along without something to hold on to. When we have nothing to trust in we may be suddenly amazed and lose our senses, in moments of consequence, and we may often be driven to some absurd superstition which will not only render us unable to abide in peace but will lead us into still deeper unrest" (ibid., pp. 19-20). This is quoted at considerable length to illustrate the Konko teaching with regard to man's helplessness and his need for a higher power in which to trust. This higher power is the Parent-God, the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth. But just as most children do not know the heart of their parents so most people are ignorant of the grace of God, and are therefore living without the special blessings, which he showers down upon those who know him.

Add to the above man's condition of bondage to various kinds of superstition and we have the helplessness and hopelessness as far as it can be painted with Konko materials.



#### 4. Soteriological Teachings

Must man, then, continue forever in this unsatisfactory state of ignorance and superstition, missing the best of life because he does not know how to secure the blessings which are in the hands of the parent-god to give? Such is no longer the case since the advent into the world of Konko-daijin, the founder of the Konko religion. The blessings of the parent-god are made available to men, his children, through the mediation of the man-god, for this is in short the position of the founder in the scheme of salvation as taught by the Konko religion. His mission in life was to teach men how to break away from superstition, ignorance, and spiritual poverty, and show them the way of life. Salvation consists in the 'New Life' which he has made possible for all to attain. The founder himself first attained unto this new life, became a god, and is now in a position to secure the blessings of God for all who will seek them in the proper way. The following is quoted at considerable length from the founder's teachings as indicating the mission of the Konko founder-god in the world, and his place in the salvation of mankind.

Now, hearing the voice of heaven and earth, awaken yourselves, The thing which can be handed down to the next world and to our descendants is a god-virtue which can be obtained by any-one, through faith without end. When we say the 'God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth'

it indicates that between heaven and earth there are proteges who do not understand his grace, and are impudent on account of their ignorance of the fact that temples or shrines, of gods or Buddhas, and houses belonging to the proteges, are all his, and on account of their sole concern about 'directions' and 'dates,' so they find themselves in distress, receiving the consequences of former times. And here is sent from God the living, great, Konko God to give blessings to those proteges who ask for them, to enlighten their understanding through hearing, and to let them prosper even unto the end, for, no God, no proteges, no proteges, no God, that is low and high are mutually supported. Through this great Konko God we are made capable of receiving the blessings of the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth, and through him God was revealed upon this earth. So both God and his proteges owe a great debt to the great Konko God. (Founder's Teachings, No. 3)

From the above, the important position of the founder, who is called the Great Konko God, is evident. Before he opened up the way there was no channel through which God's blessings could be poured upon man, and so both man and God were helpless in the situation. God was dependent upon man, and man was ignorant of his part, and so there was a deadlock. The blessings remained in the hands of the giver. The

Great Konko God was sent to reveal the way to men, to show them how they might obtain God's richest blessings. And not only that; he also assists them in an intermediary way as is clearly stated in the following: "Keep on believing, being careful not to go contrary to the sayings of the Great Konko God, for in case of need, you need not call upon Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. Just call upon the Great Konko God for help and you will receive the blessings" (Founder's teachings No. 4). From this it seems that the founder is not only God's revealer but in certain cases, his agent with power to act.

Such prayer, directed to the founder-god himself, however, is not the usual procedure. Ordinarily prayer is directed to the parent-god through the founder-god. Thus we read, "Thereupon, by prayer through the mediation of the founder, can we approach the parent-god in reality" ("Konko-kyo," p. 14). And so in all phases of man's salvation Konko-daijin acts in the capacity of an intermediary between man and the parent-god, Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami.

In the matter of salvation Konko-kyo lays little stress upon a future life. It recognizes a life after death, but has little to say about it. It prefers to think of life as one continuous whole, in which death is only an incident, which does not seriously affect it. The future life is simply a continuation of the present. Heaven and Earth are one and the same, even though, in language, we make the distinction between them. So whether we are alive or dead still we are



in heaven and earth. Heaven and earth is the home of the soul. The individual soul lives forever. The grace of God which helps men now goes on with them into the future. The soul of the man who has done well in life goes before God and settles before him in purity. Man's highest object is to become pure before God. The souls of men who have done badly in life receive purification through the virtue of God. The founder-god has asked the parent-god to save all who ask for salvation, so by virtue of that all who ask receive. If a man dies without having asked for salvation his descendants may ask for it in his behalf, and he will receive it. Thus it becomes an important duty and privilege of the child to pray for the soul of the departed parent. In case one dies without having asked for salvation, and no descendant asks for it in his stead, can he be saved? His salvation is not only possible but inevitable for teachers of the religion may pray, and do pray, for the salvation of all men, and all men are saved. Thus in its theory of salvation, as far as it pertains to the part of life beyond death, Konko-kyo is universalist.

However, the present aspect of salvation is emphasized more than the future. Konko-kyo is more interested in the life that now is, than in the life that is to be hereafter. Its other-worldly teaching is brief, and relatively unimportant. Salvation consists largely in a "New Life" which is entered upon when one believes in and undertakes to follow the



teachings of the founder. The blessings of this new life received from the parent-god through the mediation of the great founder-god are both material and spiritual. The receiving of this new life with all its blessings, material and spiritual, is salvation.

Among the material blessings for which believers are instructed to pray and which they expect to receive are good crops, good herds, business prosperity and health of body. Good health is considered to be an important part of man's salvation. We are reminded in the founder's teachings that men "cannot perform their family occupations in pain and sickness" and that they should therefore ask for bodily health (Founder's teachings No. 51). Again we read "desire the health of your body. Strengthen your body for your body is the foundation of all things" (Guides to Faith, No. 16-17). The conditions upon which health and long life may be secured are goodness and purity of heart, and faith. This purity of heart is itself a part of salvation. God imparts his virtue to believers. This divine virtue in man makes for long life. "Receive the divine virtue; get human virtue. If you wish to live long do so by heaping up divine virtue. Let your heart be the saver of your body" (Guides to Faith, No. 4-6). "A sick person or a person suffering from incessant miseries coming down from former generations, can obtain god's blessings, but he is often like the person who tries to clean out a well, but on account of the tediousness stops when the work

is eight or nine tenths done, and consequently leaves the work undone and the water impure. So with the person who stops believing on the way; he cannot cut the root of sickness and misery. Believe with a single and brave heart in order to make the water of your well pure, and cut off the root of sickness and miseries, that you may be healthy and prosper" (Founder's teachings, No. 28).

The above extracts from the founder's teachings indicate not only the fact that good health is considered an important asset in life, but further that there is a close relation between health and faith, and between health and right condition of heart or inner life. Progress in the New Life opened up by the founder involves an acquisition by the believer of heart virtue and faith, and these are the things which strike at the root of sickness and misery and result in health and prosperity. The reason so many fail to achieve these objects is because they go part way along the road of faith. They get tired and stop before the well is cleaned.

In this teaching regarding bodily health the founder makes one reference at least to the proper attitude of the believer toward medicines. You recover more quickly if you pray first, and then take medicines, but if you take medicine first and then pray you will be left without the blessings" (Founder's teachings, No. 47). Here the beneficial result of the use of medicine is dependent upon its being properly subordinated to prayer. To take medicine first and then pray

afterward would indicate that the patient expected to be cured by the medicine and that the prayer is an afterthought. To pray first and take medicine afterward would indicate that the patient expects to receive health in answer to his prayer and the medicine is merely an assistant means which God is pleased to use. It is only when the two are so related in the mind of the patient that the blessing will be forthcoming. When questioned as to his belief in the matter of faith healing, a leading figure in the Konko Church replied, "In cases of illnesses which people cannot cure by their own strength they are helped by God, day and night, through their belief. It is a fact that believers are receiving this help day and night. This cannot be explained. The spiritual experiences of people cause them to feel that it is true. This applies to illness and to all sorts of things. There is nothing in our sect in the nature of magic, or incantation. All of the other sects use magic. In Konko-kyo there is no laying on of hands; only prayer. When man reaches the deepest faith, the spirit of God enters into his consciousness." This conception of the importance of bodily health and the possibility of people securing a large measure of it by the mercy of God through the aid of the founder-god constitutes an important item in the idea of salvation. This, together with crops, business prosperity, and family success should come to the person who has entered upon the "New Way" which was opened up for all men by Konko-daijin.



Still greater emphasis is laid upon the spiritual phase of salvation. Some of these spiritual blessings are set forth in a discussion by one of the clergy of the highest rank, who says that the founder of the church "taught the way of life by means of which we can obtain true peace, tasting an unspeakable joy, understanding the value of life, feeling strong and vivacious developing fully the nature of our being, as men, because those who are suffering from pain or remorseful of sin are set free from their burdens of life and saved and helped thorough the grace of the parent-god, the real existence of heaven and earth ("Konko-kyo," p. 9). True peace, unspeakable joy, an understanding of life's value, freedom from life's burdens are mentioned here as available to men by the grace of god. The paragraph following the above quoted passage states that these all are a part of the new life made possible by virtue of the true faith of the founder.

There are several references to the unity of God and men as a part of the New Life, in one of which this unity is said to be the climax of the religion. The latter statement is as follows: "It is the climax of our religion to become one unified whole with mutual affection of God and man, proteges having faithfulness, reverence and trust from the lower side, and the parent-god desiring to give help and blessings from above" ("Konko-kyo," p. 14). Another reference to this unity is, "Though the founder was but a farmer he attained to

the rank of man-god, revealing his great personality by showing a faith that would bring that unity, God and man" (ibid., p. 8). The precise nature of this unity is nowhere explained, but we may well suppose that it is a unity of understanding and sympathy such as exists between a solicitous parent and a trusting child, since this comparison is drawn repeatedly. In the first of the two passages quoted above on this subject, this unity is represented as involving faithfulness, reverence and trust on the part of man and the desire to give blessings on the part of God. In a later division of the subject I shall try to show that a oneness of nature also is implied. This unity with God, true peace, unspeakable joy and the material blessings such as business prosperity and bodily health constitute the New Way which was revealed to the world by Konko-daijin, and which is salvation as conceived of, and taught, by Konko-kyo.

Now true progress in this "way" involves certain things. These are worship, prayer, trust, training, spiritual experience, and thanksgiving.

The forms of worship have already been touched upon. Some ideas about worship as one of the necessities for progress in the "New Way" are found expressed in the founder's teachings, and in later writings. Worship is not a matter of external forms entirely. It is a matter primarily of the heart. One's heart should be so engaged when worshipping that surrounding circumstances cannot distract or disturb.

"When one worships, after he has clapped his hands before the shrine he should not turn away, even if pierced with a spear. Your oneness of heart will not reach unto God if you are turned away by sounds and voices" (Founder's teachings, No. 97). The worshipper who takes notice of such trifling occurrences is only going through the motions; his heart is not wholly in it. Such worship is useless. Only wholehearted worship avails anything.

While it is recognized and plainly stated that God is not confined within any particular place, such as a shrine, and can therefore be worshipped anywhere in heaven or earth, yet the importance of shrine worship or church worship is insisted upon. One of the founder's instructions urges the propriety of arising early in the morning, for if one gets up late it has a bad effect upon his going to the shrine to worship. Nor should one be hindered from going to the shrine by unfavorable weather. "You must not think that it is too difficult for you to go up to the shrine if it rains, or even pours. Perseverance is a good training for perfecting one's virtue" (Founder's teachings, No. 68). In other words shrine worship is important enough to demand that the believer should not allow lack of time or unpleasant weather to interfere with it.

How often should one worship? In answer to this question we find an instruction which says, "Your daily renewing is the first thing in your faith" (Founder's teachings,



No. 35). One's faith requires the continual renewing of daily worship. Such piety as is expressed by one who is faithful to his duty in the matter of daily worship is commendable. "Though you are strong do not neglect to be pious. Piety makes brighter the gem of your heart" (Guides to Faith 20-21). The unpious feel satisfied with an occasional visit to the shrine but this is not sufficient. Our spirits need daily renewing.

The purpose which worship serves is stated as follows: "it is important to worship and pray, not only in our houses but always to go to church to offer our special worship and prayer for the furthering and elevating of our faith, and the opening of our minds which easily become clouded, thus polishing the gem of the heart and showing forth its true nature" ("Konko-kyo," p. 22). Worship serves to strengthen and elevate faith and to refine the mind and heart. It is a polish which brings out the best that is in a person.

As to the manner in which worship should be conducted, simplicity is recommended. We are told that a complicated ceremony is not needed. Besides the shrine in the church the believer should have a place in his own home where he can worship the parent-god in much the same attitude as a child has toward its earthly parent. Here in the home shrine not only can one hold the morning and evening services but one can make offerings of sake, boiled rice of the new crop, or the first portion of a present received from another person ("Konko-

kyo," p. 15 f). In worshipping, loud clapping of the hands is not necessary, for God can hear even a small voice.

To whom is worship to be directed? It was stated previously that Konko-kyo recognizes all of the other gods of Japan, and also of other countries. Recognition, however, does not imply worship. Members of the Konko-kyo recognize a myriad of gods and believe in their existence, but they worship only Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami with religious faith. We read in the founder's teachings as already quoted, "some say they worship all of the gods in Japan, but that is too many for you to worship. Suppose you ask one person for something; he will exert himself to do it for you. But if you ask many persons for it you will be talking with them endlessly to little effect. So it is that when you employ carpenters you must have one among them who is head . . . so in worshipping God, if you worship with one heart you can soon get blessings" (Founder's teachings, No. 36).

In the above nothing is said about the falsity, or the non-existence of other gods. Their existence is accented as a matter of course. The only argument is that it is more profitable to direct your worship towards one. You will get your blessings more readily if you worship only Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. To call upon the other gods for blessings would be to involve yourself in much words with little effect. Therefore choose the more economic course and worship only Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami.

As to ancestors as objects of worship, the educated leaders of the sect today claim that worship is not directed toward ancestors. The rice, sake, etc. which are offered to deceased ancestors are only tokens of the love and respect of the child for the parent. Such an offering is not an act of worship. Whether it becomes such in the minds of the less informed members is a question, which may call for comment in a later division of the subject. The present section is an endeavour to set forth the teachings and beliefs as they are found in the literature of the sect and in the opinions of its leaders. The official opinion is that ancestors are only loved and respected not worshipped, by members of the Konko-church. (See Section II for lengthy criticism of this.)

The long and short of the matter of who is worshipped in Konko-kyo then is this: ancestors are loved and respected, all gods are recognized, but the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth alone is worshipped with religious faith. This worship should be wholehearted, frequent, both at home and at church, and simple in its form. Such worship is the first requisite for, and part of, progress in the New Life.

The second requisite is prayer. The importance of prayer is urged by Mr. Sato in the following words: "Now prayer is most important for our faith for the only way to commune with God in this world is through true prayer" ("Konko-kyo," p. 17). And again, "It is unquestionably true that faith consists not of reasonings and disputes. Through really



intense prayer do we understand the secret that God dwells in our hearts, if we perform our service wholeheartedly. For therein we see God and meet with him. So prayer is indeed the life of our devotion and consequently the most important power in our daily lives" ("Konko-kyo," p. 19). Such statements are clearly intended to beget in the minds of believers the important part played by prayer in the development of the spiritual life. It is that medium through which we see God and know him. It is the one and only medium through which we can commune with him. It is prayer which gives reality to our devotion, and power to our daily life.

But not all that is called by the name of prayer holds so important a place. Outside of the Konko religion many repeat formulas which they call prayer, but the prayer of the Konko-kyo differs from the so-called prayer of the world. The first of the two passages cited above refers not merely to prayer but to 'true prayer.' When we seek to learn what is the Konko conception of true prayer, we find that it has several characteristics. One of these is sincerity. "If we have this one thing, sincerity, we can be heard of God and can receive his wonderful blessings when we pray . . ." ("Konko-kyo," p. 18). "We will do well to pray with single hearted sincerity as though we were asking something of our parents" (ibid., p. 17). Lack of sincerity in prayer is characterized as 'lieing to God.' Lack of wholeheartedness in prayer is suggested as a cause of the lack of results from prayer.

"Heretofore perhaps God has not spoken to you because you prayed half-heartedly. But if you did do it with single-heart you will be heard, since he is within your heart" (Founder's teachings, No. 5). Another mark of true prayer is calmness. "Your heart is the measure by which you can believe God. So when you come before him you must, in particular, be calm and ask quietly and with composure" (Founder's teachings, No. 98). "So when we appear before him let us calm down our minds, and remember that we are in the presence of God, and are now to stand face to face with him" ("Konko-kyo," p. 17 f). Such quotations could be multiplied if necessary. The frequency of the references, as well as their plainness, indicates a dislike for clamorousness, and a sense of the propriety and the value of calmness before God when engaged in prayer.

In keeping with the conception of God as everywhere present is the teaching that prayer may be engaged in at any time and in any place. Although the home shrine and the church are the most usual places for prayer, they are not the only places, and one should keep in mind that he can pray to God "any time and anywhere" ("Konko-kyo," p. 15). Any place in heaven or earth if we have truth in our hearts and pray to God, there will be the temple of God. So we may "pray in places where God is not usually worshipped, for instance in bed, or at the workshop in case of urgent needs" ("Konko-kyo," p. 18).

There is not sufficient reference to hand-clapping as a part of prayer ceremony to establish a claim that such hand-clapping is necessary in prayer. The common Shinto custom, however, is followed and the attention of God is always invoked by clapping the hands firmly together, usually two or three times.

Another characteristic of true prayer is trust. With worship and prayer as the first two, trust is the third of the six elements or essentials to progress in the new way opened up by the founder-god for all mankind. "Beware of the lack of true faith among believers" (Guides for the true way, No. 5; "Konko-kyo," p. 31). Believers ought not to be fearful or anxious. They should trust God. "So if we settle our minds in true devotional practices, and neither stray nor doubt even in times of emergency . . . and trust the Father-God with oneness of heart for life or death, casting away all kinds of unrest according to the instruction 'believe with no anxiety of mind,' we can conduct ourselves with the feeling that we truly are safe as in a large boat. It seems that the impetus of all our activities comes from that trust, for trust leads us into a state of firm peace, whence comes the peace of our minds, as well as all other kinds of peace" ("Konko-kyo," p. 20 f). "Cast away doubts, open and see the broad and true way, and you will find yourselves living in the midst of divine virtue" (Great principles of the teaching, No. 2). "When you enter the true way first disperse the doubts of





your heart" (Guides to Faith, No. 2). "Trust with all your heart while it is today, and this month, and you will find blessings within your heart" (Great Principles of the Teaching, No. 1). These and other such kernels of instruction warn the believer against all forms of doubt and anxiety and urge upon him the necessity of true faith as the means by which peace of mind and all kinds of peace, as well as all other blessings, are to be obtained. Such trust is a part of the "true way." "Those who have faith should not be frightened; whatever may happen they should not be in the least afraid. If you believe, there will be more blessings which cannot be seen than those which can be seen; more blessings which we do not perceive than those which we do perceive. Looking back afterward we may know that this or that was all a part of his blessings. That is the way with true believers" (Founder's teachings, No. 52). Believe and receive his blessings" (ibid., No. 8).

Trust or faith is in one place compared to enriching the soil. As things planted in fertilized soil will grow, and flourish so the life which is enriched by faith will be productive of good (Founder's teachings, No. 51). Again it is represented by the figure of a staff which will not break. A metal staff will bend, and a bamboo staff will break, but he who leans in faith upon God may rest easily (ibid., No. 57).

One symptom of true faith is the element which it contains of friendliness toward God. The kind of faith which,

on the contrary, approaches God in fear is not true faith. Men should try to approach God with a friendly, not a fearful, faith (p. 50).

Further one's faith should be his own private possession, a matter between himself and God alone. You need not depend upon your friend for matters which concern your belief in God. If you need to depend upon a friend in such matters while you are living, you will have to rely upon that friend when you come to die. This would often be inconvenient or impossible, so let your faith be a matter between yourself and God (Founder's teachings, No. 26). An idea similar to this is again expressed in company with another idea, viz. united or family faith, in the following words, "a faith which is forced by someone is a faith of borrowed wisdom which is easily done away with. Hence, have a true faith of your own. They speak of a group faith. A stone which cannot be lifted by one, can be lifted readily by the united force of a group, without shout. That cannot be done by an individual. So believe with the united faith of the whole family" (ibid., No. 24). The strongest faith, then, is the united faith of a family, the members of which, individually, possess a faith in God which is direct and personal.

Again, the faith which brings blessings is the faith which continues unwavering, even through long adversity.

"When you ask yourself why is it that you suffer such and such untoward things in spite of the extent of your faith,

you are thereby having a pause in your faith. If, on the other hand you reason that it is because you are as yet lacking in faith, and go on believing with a single heart, you can thereby obtain his blessings" (p. 58; Founder's teachings 42).

The fourth essential to progress in the "true way" is what is called training. During life we are just like school children passing through a course of training. But the students' training is chiefly mind training. That with which Konko-kyo has chiefly to do is heart training. This is clearly differentiated from the common practices carried on in connection with religious self-discipline. "Fire and water practices" are disclaimed by the founder. The commonly observed practices of the religious ascetic have nothing in common with the heart training of the Konko believer. His training, while it has an individualistic aim has also a social aim. The individualistic aim is to steady the heart, which is prone to be driven about by our passions and selfishness, away from the Father-God, into deeper and deeper depths of misery, and to anchor it in the harbor of God's favor and blessings.

The social aim of training is to beget a condition of heart which will have a practical bearing for good on our daily conduct "first in our family life, and then in the life of society at large" ("Konko-kyo," p. 23). In favor of such an aim the founder specifically denounces ascetic practices.



Of what then does this training consist? It consists of a "daily renewing" of the spirit of prayer and devotional exercises. The whole Konko system of worship purports to be the answer to the question. Prayer, which is the life of devotion, and worship both at home, and in the church are the tools upon which we must depend for "polishing the gem of our hearts and showing forth its true nature." It is stated by a leading formulator of the church's organization and teaching, that it is not necessary "to go without tea, salt, fire, or to fast or bathe in cold water, for the training of our religion is heart-training rather than a training in external acts. So if we keep on in that way day and night, not slackening our devotions, we will acquire that very feeling of gratitude which will make itself manifest in the daily practical conduct, first in the family life, and then in the life of society at large" ("Konko-kyo," p. 23). So this idea of training is very simple, and briefly dealt with. It consists chiefly in being a good member of the Konko Church, and participating in its forms of worship.

The fifth essential to progress in the true way, or indication of such progress is "Spiritual Experience." The founder said "do not consider the spiritual experience, obtained through faith in God, to be something strange. It is more strange if you do not obtain this experience when you have faith" (ibid., p. 24). There are still some people who ridicule the idea of anything like spiritual experience as

though it were a kind of superstition of the ignorant. However this is a misconception on the part of those who are without faith, and who do not know God. This spiritual experience, of course, cannot be explained by the science of today, nor can it be conjectured by those who are without faith. The founder taught the fact of this experience by the example of his own life as well as by word and it is claimed that the present members of the church receive such experience according to the measure of their devotion to the way.

As to the nature of this spiritual experience, it is described as a possessing of the influence of Gods virtue, which is wonderful and mysterious, to such an extent that the possessor can feel a living strength coming into and overflowing his body and soul. This indwelling of divine virtue, like all other spiritual blessings, is made available for all who enter upon the "true way" by reason of the fact that the founder himself attained to that state, and wills that all others likewise shall attain to it. All who truly seek to follow the way which he pointed out can have this spiritual experience. If they do not have it they are not making progress in the way. The founder warned his followers against standing still in the way. "Beware of finding yourself standing in the true way, not walking it it" (Guides for the True Way, 4). He who progresses properly in the way will not let the matter rest with listening to sermons but

will work out the truths which he hears in his own heart (Founder's teachings, 41). He will also cultivate his powers of spiritual vision, not depending upon the eyes of the flesh (Guides to Faith, 8). Separation from self-passion and self-lust is urged by the founder as an essential to knowledge of the true way (ibid., 11).

The sixth essential to progress in the true way is thanksgiving. It is at the same time an essential to progress and a result of progress. As the believer goes further along the true way he will feel a growing sense of "unspeakable thankfulness." Such a feeling of gratitude should spring up naturally in the heart. If it does not come the indication would be that progress is not being made. Such gratitude should be felt for all the blessings of God, special mention being made, in the teachings, of food, drink, and health.

These six ideas, worship, prayer, trust, training, spiritual experience, and thanksgiving are considerably dwelt upon in the founder's teaching and in the writings of present-day commentators. They are the marks of progress in the true way. All believers should experience all these six. The lack of even one of them in the believer's life indicates a lack in his understanding, or his practice of the founder's teachings.

## 5. Ethical and Social Teachings

It has often been said that Shinto has no ethical code. This is true of Shrine Shinto, but not of Church Shinto.



Konko-kyo has some ethical teachings. According to this religion, man has duties to himself, his family, to society, and to country.

1. Duty to self.--One's duty to himself is first of all to keep his body in the best possible condition. In a previous division of the subject the teachings of the Church regarding health were spoken of. To maintain good health is one of the first duties of man. To pray for bodily health is only a part of that duty. Man's active part in preserving good health is emphasized. Over-eating and other forms of intemperance tend to the destruction of the body, and should therefore be avoided. "Build up your body, for the body is the foundation of all things," said the founder.

This, however, does not comprise man's whole duty to himself. Even more important is his spiritual obligation to himself. The body depends much upon the heart. "The heart may give life to the body or kill it." "Save and help your body by your heart." These and other such statements of the founder, stress the importance of spiritual health as the compliment of bodily health. An important element in the acquisition of spiritual health is the reception of the heart of divine virtue. The virtue of God may be acquired by man. It is his duty to himself to seek to obtain this virtue of heart. Indulgence in sins which destroy the body is a result of lack of proper training of the heart. The

relation between the physical and the spiritual in man is so close and inseparable that to attempt to sever the two would be to destroy man. There is, therefore, this strong emphasis upon heart-culture as a large part of man's duty to himself.

2. Duty to family.--The founder said, "the peace of a family is the beginning of faith." Every man has certain duties toward the members of his family. These may be summed up in three main relationships: that of husband and wife, or parents and children, and of brothers and sisters. That of husband and wife is, briefly, affection and trust. It is the duty of children to be filial to their parents and of parents to love their children. The duty of the younger brother or sister is to be obedient toward the elder brother or sister, and of the elder to be kind to the younger. If the members of the family are faithful to their duties in all these respects there will be great peace and happiness and all will go well. Since the family is the foundation of all life, the observance of these duties is the foundation of all happiness in life.

3. Duty toward society.--All men are social beings and interdependent. Men have certain amounts of independence and freedom. But these rights and this freedom may be exercised only on the condition that others are not being injured thereby. The individual's inseparable relation to society creates certain duties. These are not found tabulated or

classified in the teachings of the Konko-kyo, but as gleaned from statements here and there in the literature of the church the following may be mentioned:

People should revere the aged. It is not by the virtue of the young and vigorous members of society that they are what they are. That others were born sooner, and have become old and feeble is not their fault. Each is born in his own time by the grace of God, and therefore the aged are entitled to the respect and reverence of the young (Founder's teachings, 80).

Love as opposed to hate is the proper feeling for one to have toward his fellow men.

Anger is unbecoming and unprofitable. One should at all times restrain angry feelings.

Pity is recommended as a God-like quality of heart.

Cruel or unjust treatment of other people is condemned. The founder said that when one man kills another the government takes the matter up, but God takes the matter up with the man who causes another to die in the heart. The compliment of this negative teaching is kindness and helpfulness. Not only should we refrain from doing things that will give people inward pain but we should practice positive, constructive helpfulness. As we receive aid in time of sickness or disaster, we in turn should feel grateful for the opportunity to help others.



One way in which we can fulfill our duty in this respect is by refraining from speaking of any evil which we happen to know about people. "There are many who speak evil of others, but go away from them, if you happen to be with them, and help people in secret" (Founder's teachings, No. 77).

Another thing which we should do in order to be helpful to others is to hide our troubles from them. The looking glass which from ancient times has been given by parents to the daughter when she married is not only for the purpose of helping her to keep her face clean, but to help her to avoid letting her feelings be known to others when she is experiencing sorrow or hardship (Founder's teachings, 88).

It is our duty to keep peace even when we ourselves must yield in order to obtain it.

Those who have found the "true way" of life are in duty bound to teach this way to others. They should "teach and spread the way of the true heart from generation to generation without losing the way or wandering from it" (Guides to Faith, 50). The passages in the Founder's Teachings which speak of passing on blessings to others clearly refer to spiritual blessings. If one receives knowledge of the true way he should pass it on to others. If it is good for one it is good for others also. Thus if one receives blessings a thousand may be blessed. The proper way to express your thanks to the Konko God is to lead others into the true faith, and thus become a god, though remaining below God (Founder's teachings, 61).

One should treat all people alike and treat no one as a stranger (Guides to Faith, 34).

Another duty which every man owes to society is to utilize the material blessings which God has given him to the best advantage. "God abhors wasted lands and unused houses" (Founder's teachings, 14).

4. Duty to country.--The founder of Konko-kyo taught briefly the duty of patriotism. He said, "My life is not my own. Know that it is God's, and the Emperor's." "Do not forget the great debt we owe to God, and the Emperor, having been born in God's Kingdom" (Guides for the true way, 1). "Do your business with faith and in health for the sake of the Emperor, and for the sake of the country" (Guides to Faith, 31).

Pronouncements regarding duty to country are few, however, and seem only to call attention to a generally recognized duty of faithfulness to country and Emperor.

### Social Programme

The Konko-kyo has no clearly defined social programme. And yet it appears that its teaching about love toward others, pity for, and a spirit of helpfulness toward others, have born fruit. This may be seen in several unofficial social undertakings conducted by a large number of members of the church organized temporarily for that purpose. One or two examples may serve to illustrate this. In the summer of the seventh

year of Taisho (1918) in a certain neighborhood of Fukuyama Prefecture there was a disastrous flood. When word of the suffering in that district reached the mother church at Otani in Okayama Prefecture, a prominent member went to Fukuyama and surveyed the situation. He found many houses completely wrecked and many people homeless and many others killed. He immediately wrote in red ink to all the branch churches throughout the country, announcing the conditions and soliciting contributions. He asked the training school, or seminary, at headquarters to send men to help. Twenty-five young men from the school quickly arrived on the scene ready for action. He quickly got into touch with the county and city officials and with the Red Cross, and the relief work commenced. The injured were rescued and the dead carried away, and turned over to relatives. A large tent was erected for shelter. The men worked by turns day and night for fifteen days. Money began to pour in from the churches, in response to the appeal, and was turned over to the county and town offices to be distributed to all who were in trouble. The flood continued for ten days, and receded, leaving nothing but debris where there has been growing crops of rice. About two hundred thousand bunches of young rice plants were bought in other prefectures and shipped to Fukuyama from whence they were distributed throughout the devastated area, and the crops were replanted. In addition the relief party fixed up the laboratories of the primary school, and gave all the male inhabitants a haircut.



In Shimane and Hiroshima prefectures similar social programmes were undertaken and successfully carried out. In these cases the work was organized into departments. The students were divided into groups and placed in charge of the various departments of which there were five. These were: 1. hygiene, 2. transportation, 3. communication, 4. disposal of the dead, and 5. repairs. The names of these departments suggest readily the part played by each group in the work of rescue and relief. Such examples of social activities only show the spirit of service on the part of those who did the work and those who sent in their money. How much this spirit was fostered by the social teachings of the religion, it is, of course, impossible to say. The man who organized these relief expeditions cites them as illustrations of the fruits of the humanitarian teachings of the founder. This may easily be, since it is true that the founder did teach that all people are brothers and sisters, and that we should therefore take the same attitude toward others as we do toward ourselves, giving help wherever it is needed. Such expressions as "under heaven there is no stranger" and "all help one another" might very easily foster in followers of the teachings a spirit of social service, and mutual helpfulness. So, while we cannot find any definite social programme outlined in any of the literature, or organized by the churches, we need not hesitate to accept the claim of the church leaders that there is an undercurrent of teaching, and belief in the

Konko-kyo which tends to result in social undertakings when the proper circumstances arise.

## 6. Philosophical and Metaphysical

Konko-kyo is not without its philosophical speculations. While there is nothing in the shape of a developed and systematized body of philosophical teaching in the records of the founder's sayings, there has been an attempt, on the part of some of the men who have been instrumental in the organization of the church, to build upon the very scattered and incoherent record of the teachings of the founder, a more or less coherent system of philosophy.

Chief among these efforts is that of Mr. Norio Sato in his booklet entitled, "The Great Reason of Heaven and Earth." In this a sort of philosophy of the Universe is expounded somewhat as follows: The Universe is made up of Heaven and Earth. In this Universe is God and Order. This is called the "Great Reason of Heaven and Earth." Man, who embraces in his small stature the greatness of heaven and earth might be called the "small heaven-and-earth." Since there is found a "Great Reason" in the "Great Heaven-and-Earth," there must be some "way" discoverable in the "small-heaven-and-earth." The effort to find this "small-way" in order to reach the "Great Reason" is what we call religion. Religion is found in the Unity of God and man, that is, in the absorption of the small-heaven-and-earth back into the

great-heaven-and-earth. It is very difficult for us, with our meager knowledge, to understand the Great Reason. God is only known by Himself. The door of these mysteries must be opened to man by the spirit of God. People have tried to open the door of this mystery but all have failed, excepting the founder of the Konko-kyo. He made clear to man the Great Reason of heaven and earth. Thus the Konko religion is the only key to the door of the mystery of the Universe.

Now, the terms heaven and earth as used in this system of philosophy do not contain the ordinary meanings of the words. Heaven means mystery. It applied to all that is beyond the range of our senses. It includes all that is outside the realm of visible forms. But, furthermore, it is found also in visible forms. This mystery (that is, heaven) is infinite and boundless. There is, therefore, no place in which it cannot be found, whether in the infinite world of laws of the sun, moon, and stars, or in the most minute particle of matter. It pervades everything. This is the meaning of heaven. What then is earth? Earth is semblance. All things in existence have appeared upon the coming together, and mutual attraction of this semblance and mystery. These two, semblance and mystery are finally reducible to one original existence. This wonderful original existence cannot be named or talked about. It is God. The founder of Konko-kyo came into contact with this original existence, and revealed it to the world as the "God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth" (Tenchí-Kane-no-Kami).



Heaven and earth exist together by the power of the gracious virtue of this God. By this also we human beings are brought into existence. This great heaven and earth is the birth-place of humanity, and we cannot have our being apart from it. Therefore the founder warned against being ignorant of the good of the earth, knowing only the good of heaven. For this reason Konko believers give thanks for the good of both heaven and earth.

God is called the Great Reason of this heaven and earth (this mystery and semblance, the union of which has produced all visible things). Mr. Sato tries to explain the terms 'great' and 'reason,' in terms comprehensible to all, as follows: 'Great' has several significations. It means, in the first place, 'governing.' Then also it means 'first' or 'fundamental.' 'Reason' is the divine law underlying all of the laws of heaven and earth. The 'Great Reason of heaven and earth,' therefore, is the explanation and the cause which lie at the root of all existence, it is the "way and why of the Universe."

By this Great Reason of heaven and earth all things come into existence. All visible things are of the earth. They are the manifestations of earth. All creatures were produced on earth and they cannot be sought anywhere else but on earth. But it cannot be simply said that they are out of the earth. They were all produced upon receiving the causal force which is called the "Grace of heaven." Take for example

the rice plant with its single head of rice. This was, indeed, produced on the earth. But it has gone through the processes of germination, growth, and fruitage, on the earth, by the "Grace of heaven." So also we human beings, though we come from the body of a mother, have our origin in the divine spirit. While heaven and earth appear to us to be separate and apart, they are in reality "two but one, and one but two." Thus comes into play the principle or reason of living and becoming. By this reason all things are brought into existence and kept in their places between heaven and earth. By this reason all things are put into action perfectly and harmoniously. This reason is found in man just as in things. This principle of living and becoming is the cause of evolution and development. All things develop and evolve in accord with their own way and also, from time to time, according to this reason.

What then is the ultimate end of all evolution. The evolution and development of all things is the extension of the "Great Reason of heaven and earth." And this Great Reason is no other than the divine nature of the God of the Konko-kyo. So, the ultimate end of evolution is the return to God. To this end all of its laws are ordered and harmoniously arranged. This mystery of heaven and earth we cannot understand, only fear. Therefore putting aside all doubts we should be enlightened by faith. This is the only course for us to take.

The return of the human soul to God is its complete union with him. After all the spirit of man is the same essence with God. The body is the offspring of the earthly parents, but the spirit is the child of God and of the same substance with him. He who becomes pure in spirit and obeys the precepts of God enters the realm of oneness with him. The process by which this unity is reached is called heart-training. According to this idea the reform of the life begins in the heart and works toward the outside. In contrast to heart-training is the outer-training which begins with externals and hopes, by reforming these, to correct the heart. The former method is the best one. The heart cannot be made right by form. By following the course of heart-training, complete union with God can be reached. Konko-daijin attained to it, and opened the way for all men to attain. He said, "prefer heart-training to deed-training." In this method there is no need to flee to the mountains or to abandon one's family. One can practice this discipline of heart in whatever place and amid whatever circumstances he may happen to be.

Such is, in brief, the content of Mr. Sato's booklet called "The Great Reason of Heaven and Earth."



## SECTION II

### A Comparative Criticism

Section I of this discussion was an attempt merely to describe Konko-kyo in its historical development and doctrinal content, so nearly as possible from the viewpoint of a member of that church. No critical tests were applied and no comparisons of any kind made. Everything was accepted at face value with no attempt to prove, disprove or evaluate. In the following section, comparisons with other religions, as well as some criticisms of the teachings 'per se' will be offered.

#### A. The Founder and Rise of the Sect

In his sincerity and purity of motive, there is no doubt that the founder of Konko-kyo was very much like the founders of all of the great religions of the world. There is no religion which is treated by the science of comparative religion today as one of the great religions of the world, whose founder does not appear to be sincere in his teaching. Jesus, Buddha, Muhammed, all were sincere in their mission and message. That Muhammed was not sincere in some of his later divine revelations seems almost beyond doubt, but that in the beginning he felt divinely called to be the prophet of God, and that he believed that the message which he felt called upon to preach was the message of God, seems to be

beyond question. There is nothing in the life or teachings of the founder of Konko-kyo which should lead anyone to suppose that there was any unworthy or insincere motive which prompted him in his work of instituting a new religion. Insincere founders of religions are extremely rare in the history of the world. Where fraud and unworthy motive have played a part, short life and rapid decay have characterized the enterprise. While Konko-kyo is still too young to claim any consideration on the ground of longevity, it at least stands in no danger of disintegration, due to any fraud or insincerity on the part of the founder. He had nothing to gain for himself except the satisfaction of doing what he felt to be his duty, and the pleasure of seeing many people accept his teachings. In this he was like Gautama. We can have no doubt that when Gautama quietly closed the door of the room in which lay his sleeping wife and newly born son, it was a tremendous sacrifice. He had all to lose and nothing to gain for himself when he renounced all that was dearest to him for the sake of the accomplishment of his task. That he might have fulfilled his mission without having broken those family ties, many of us now believe. That he did sever those relationships when he believed they had to be severed for the good of the cause, speaks for the sincerity and purity of his purpose. The homeless life of Jesus after the beginning of his public ministry, which was opposed as madness by those dearest to him, is another illustration of the

case in hand. The fact that in the case of Jesus it was a sacrifice unto death establishes the absolute sincerity and firmness of his purpose beyond any possibility of doubt.

In the case of the founder of Konko-kyo, however, there is no such striking proof of his sincerity. He broke no family ties. He did not leave the comforts of a home, nor go out into a cold world to preach an unwelcome gospel. But this does not argue against his sincerity. It was simply a difference of conditions and perhaps of personal belief. He did not feel called upon to thrust aside the family, the responsibility of which he had once assumed. He did feel called upon to abandon his previous occupation and devote his whole time to teaching the truths which he believed were divinely given to him.

This brings us to another point of comparison. The method in which Konko-daijin proceeded to make known his divinely revealed teachings to the world, was different from that employed by any of the founders of the great religious systems. Gautama left his home to seek salvation in a life of asceticism, and not finding it there sought elsewhere until, finally, through a long night under the sacred bo tree the "Four Noble Truths" were revealed to him. He, thereupon, knew that he had found salvation. He had become "Buddha," the "Enlightened One." He immediately set out in search of his former teachers to tell them of his discovery, but finding that they had died he found his former disciples, who had



abandoned him when he turned away from the ascetic life, and won them over to his Four Noble Truths with their "Noble Eightfold Paths." He then went and won his wife, father and son. Then going about from place to place he explained this new deliverance from suffering to all who would hear him. It is said that in the rainy season he would go to a favorable place and teach, and during the remaining months would teach in other places. In other words he was an itinerant teacher.

The same was true of Muhammed. When his system of belief had taken shape in his own mind he determined to make it known to the world. To this end he went about in the public places of Mecca, exhorting the people to abandon their idolatrous worship, and worship only the one Supreme, Merciful God, whose prophet he claimed to be. Then when he met with forceful opposition he declared his intention from thenceforth to propagate his doctrines by means of the sword. This he did so successfully that before his death he had forced his beliefs upon practically all of Arabia.

Jesus left his home, travelled up and down throughout the narrow strip of country generally called Palestine, and proclaimed his message. He took about with him a group of disciples whom he was purposely training to carry on his work. Never remaining long in one place, he went about rendering helpful service to those who came for help, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men.

With all these facts in our minds we are struck with surprise and with a sense of the unusual when we learn that Konko-daijin, after he began his teaching never went outside of his own gate during twenty-five years. He never went out to propagate his doctrines, but preferred to remain quietly at home and teach those who would come to him. Those who came and were converted went back to their homes and brought others to hear of the "New Way." In this way the founder fulfilled his mission of proclaiming to the world the light which had been revealed to him.

There is scarcely any occasion for discussing the comparative merits of these various methods of propagating beliefs. Whether Konko-daijin could have accomplished more by going out and proclaiming his message in public places is, of course, only a matter of speculation. He might possibly have gained a more extensive following to begin with, if he had a strong personality, but in the long run the success of any system of religion or philosophy depends not upon the method of propagation adopted by its first teacher, but on the inherent truth which it contains. So between Konko-daijin and Gautama, for example, the comparison of method is one of facts only, not of merits or values.

But when we come to consider the method employed by Muhammed there is room for a broader comparison than one of fact. Of the two methods of teaching and propagating doctrine, that of Konko-daijin was far superior morally to that of

Muhammed. That Muhammed succeeded in establishing his rule over a large territory, and over a large number of people can not be denied, but the moral sense of most of the world today revolts against the methods used. Planting a religious banner over a territory by force of arms and converting the population at the point of the sword does not appeal favorably to the modern conscience. I am inclined to believe that the method employed by the founder of Konko-kyo was a good one. Instead of going out trying to sell his wares he got the customers coming to him. He somehow impressed upon the consciousness of those who accepted his teaching, their duty towards those who were yet in ignorance of the truth. He thus had a stream of enquirers coming to his house to seek the true way of life. So in explaining the teachings to these inquirers he spent the last twenty-five years of his life so completely within the walls of his own house that it is recorded of him that during that time he never went outside the gate. Whether that is literally and absolutely true would seem doubtful and yet it may be true. At any rate it is proof enough of his 'stay at home' method of spreading his beliefs.

As to the founder's belief and teaching about the origin of his message--Konko-kyo is more like Muhammedanism and Christianity, than Buddhism. Gautama was not much concerned about the gods. He does not claim any divine origin for his revelation. The truth simply dawned upon him, after a long search and much contemplation. So little was he



concerned about the 'powers that be,' that the system which he taught has been denied the name of religion by many people. Muhammed, on the other hand, claimed divine revelation as the source of his message. It was a message from God to his prophet, transmitted by the angel Gabriel. The Christian doctrine of divine revelation through Jesus Christ need only be mentioned. The claim of Konko-daijin to divine authority for his message does not differ materially from either of these latter two. The absence of an intermediary between him and God makes the similarity a little closer to Christianity than to Muhammedanism, but does not make it differ in essence from the latter. In the case of all three founders the claim is that the message which they proclaim to the world is the word of God to men. The claims are very similar. In this respect Konko-kyo differs from Buddhism alone, which made no such claim.

The immediate circumstances which called forth Konko-kyo both resemble and differ from those which brought Buddhism into being. In each there was a strong protest. But the protest differed in each case. We may say in general that Buddhism contained a strong reaction against the prevailing religious practices of India at that period. In the case of Konko-kyo, however, it is claimed by the leaders of the church today that the founder had no complaint to make against any existing religion. And, indeed, no such complaint can be found in the scant record of his teachings. On the other

hand, suggestions quite the opposite of complaint are not lacking. Tolerance of the other religions is urged, as was pointed out in Section I of this paper. But there is a strong element of protest running through the founder's teachings, not against the prevailing religious systems as such, but against certain superstitions which at that time infested the country. These superstitions were not peculiar to Japan, but prevailed all through the Orient. They had to do chiefly with good and bad luck, various ways of discovering what day should be lucky for opening up a store or any new business, getting married, starting on a journey etc. Many misfortunes were blamed on the unlucky character of the day or were thought to be the curse of a certain God. It is claimed that Konko-daijin, during his younger life, suffered under certain of these superstitions, believing that certain misfortunes which befell the family were the curse of a certain god. This background, which might be greatly enlarged upon since there really were a great many such superstitious beliefs and practices, explains the frequent references to, and protests against, these superstitions in the founder's teachings. Freedom from such things seemed to be a part of his divinely given message.

In this circumstance surrounding the rise of Konko-kyo there is a point of similarity to Muhammedanism and to Christianity also. The protest in the former was against idolatrous beliefs and practices then prevalent in Arabia. Muhammed

called the people away from idolatry to worship the one true God. Christianity in its essence was a protest against the extremely formal and legalistic character of the Jewish religion of that time. In that Konko-kyo contained such a strong protest against the prevailing superstitions of the period it resembles these other greater religions.

But when we ask about the degree of similarity we are forced to answer that it is slight. The likeness lies only in the fact of there being in each case a protest against an existing condition. Gautama offered, in place of what he found, a practical moral and ethical code; Muhammed pointed the way to a pure mono-theistic belief in place of the existing idolatry of his country. Jesus put morality and religion in the heart of man instead of in the external adherence to certain prescribed rules and regulations. But what Konko-daijin offered to his fellowmen was neither new in essence nor in application in his community. He offered no new idea about God, and no new moral or ethical standards which had not been already proclaimed by other religions previously established in his country. The only thing new about his contribution to religious thought was in the fact that he posed as the hero and originator of ideas which he should have known were already current. More of this will be noticed when we come to compare the teachings with those of some of the great world religions.



## B. Scriptures

Konko-daijin was like most of the founders of the well known religious systems in having written nothing by his own hand. He, like Muhammed, Gautama, and Jesus, left no written documents containing his teaching. In each case the work of compilation and preservation was left to the diligence of enthusiastic disciples. In each case these disciples had had a more or less intensive and thorough training in the presence of their master, and were quite qualified to give a fair representation of his thoughts and intentions. That minor mistakes should not be made would be too much to expect of human agents, but that on the whole the representations are fairly accurate seems a reasonable supposition.

A comparison of the sacred writings of the various religions, leaves much to be desired in the case of Konko-kyo. Either the founder said very little or else the disciples failed to record much of what he said. The Christian scriptures are composed of a number of records and letters selected out of a great mass of material written and compiled by the immediate disciples of Jesus. In all of these records, although there are apparently a few minor discrepancies, there is substantial agreement so that a complete and accurate conception of the teachings of Jesus can be formed. The Koran as it is today is an early revision of a large collection of sayings of Muhammed compiled soon after his death, by his disciples, without regard to chronological order. The Buddhist

Scriptures are composed of many volumes of material compiled at different periods and dealing mostly with the life and sayings of Gautama. With all of these voluminous scriptures before our eyes we cannot help feeling the scanty character of the records of the life and sayings of Konko-daijin. However, we must remember that Konko-kyo is only in its beginnings, and that basic literature still has a chance to grow. Children and disciples of the founder are still living. Some of these disciples are devoting much time even now to the composition of records of the life of their master, and developing further the ideas so briefly and incoherently recorded as having been spoken by him. If Konko-kyo has a long life it will undoubtedly have a fuller and more orderly scripture basis than it has now. The small pamphlets and booklets which are now coming from the pens of the leaders will probably receive consideration like that given to the correspondence of Paul and others in the Christian Scriptures.

### C. Organization

In the lack of organization at the death of the founder, Konko-kyo resembles Christianity, and differs from Buddhism. During the life of Jesus no order or church or other organization was affected. Indeed it is doubtful if any was anticipated. Jesus' mission was to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and instill into men's hearts a religion of the inner life free from the burdens of man-made law. It was only when

his disciples and followers found it necessary to the conduct of the growing business of preaching the Gospel and instructing the converts that an organization gradually took shape. Gautama, on the other hand, early in his career as a reformer, formed the 'Order' which, with Buddha and the doctrine, was an object of the vow of the convert. This Order, of which there was one division for men and one for women, had an extremely detailed set of rules and regulations for all departments of the life of the inmate. Wherever the teaching went, the organization accompanied its establishment, and was its means of propagation as well as its method of subsistence. But in the case of Konko-kyo, as with Christianity, there was no such organization during the lifetime of the founder. Believers in his teachings were scattered far and wide throughout the country and, in one place at least, meetings were being held which might have been the germ of an organization, but the real work of organizing did not begin until the eighteenth year of Meiji (1885), two years after the founder's death.

Just what went on during the two years between the death of Konko-daijin and the meeting of the followers who began the work of organizing the Konko church is not difficult to surmise. The disciples would naturally be zealous for the propagation of the master's divinely given instructions. His sayings would be told to friends and acquaintances. Certain of the followers would come to be recognized as leaders



on account of their knowledge of the "New Way" and their zeal in advancing the cause. There would gradually grow up a demand for more efficient ways and means of handling the growing correspondence, instruction and other business connected with the progress of the teaching. Hence the meeting called for the second day of the sixth month of the eighteenth of Meiji (1885), (related in Section I), at which serious discussion was begun, and out of which grew the Konko church.

The character of the organization which grew out of that beginning has been described very briefly as to the facts. It remains to give a fuller idea of the organization, using as a basis the constitution under which it obtained government sanction, and to offer a few criticisms and comparisons.

## THE CONSTITUTION

### Chapter I

#### The Name and Teaching of the Sect

1. This sect shall be called Konko-kyo.
2. The purpose of the sect shall be to enshrine the Gods listed below, in accordance with the spirit of the teachings of the founder, Konko-daijin; to perform the ceremonies; to teach the true beliefs; to explain the principle of Heaven and Earth; to cultivate patriotism; to encourage calmness in life and death. These Gods are:

- a. The Great Sun Goddess (Amaterasu O mi Kami)
- b. The Moon God (Tsuki no O Kami)
- c. The God of Brightness (Kane no O Kami)

These three Gods are called Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami.

Besides these three Gods, the spirit of the founder (Kyososhin) is enshrined.

- 3. The teaching and ceremonies of the sect shall be according to the following books:
  - 1. Shinkai seiden (Right transmission of God's precepts).
  - 2. Shinjin no Kokoroe (Guides to Faith).
  - 3. Dokyo no Taiko (Great Principles of the Teaching).
  - 4. O harai no Kotoba (The Great Purification).
  - 5. Sosen haishi (Formula for Worshipping the Founder).
  - 6. Saiten Seigi (True meaning of the Religious Festival).
  - 7. Seinen shiki (Coming of age ceremony).
  - 8. Kekkon shiki (Marriage ceremony).
  - 9. Sogi shiki (Funeral ceremony).

## Chapter II

### Subsection I. Kwancho

- 4. The Kwancho shall superintend the sect under these provisions.
- 5. The Kwancho may call the Congress, order its opening and closing, suspension or dissolution.
- 6. The Kwancho may prescribe rules, with the agreement of Congress, and execute them with the permission of the

"Competent Public Authorities" (Department of Home Affairs of the National Government).

7. The Kwancho may prescribe orders which shall replace the rules in urgent matters, and execute them immediately with the permission of the Competent Public Authorities.
8. The Kwancho shall execute the provisions and rules, and shall issue necessary orders for the transaction of the business of the sect, within the limits of the provisions and rules.
9. The Kwancho shall have charge of the appointment and dismissal of teachers and the personnel of the Head Office, branches and churches.
10. The Kwancho shall administer the rewards and punishments of teachers and the rewards of the believers.
11. The Kwancho shall judge of the rightness of the faith of believers.
12. The Kwancho shall be succeeded by a man of the male line of the founder of the sect, and shall acquire the office with the permission of the Competent Public Authorities. His application shall have the counter-signature of the vice-Kwancho, the Head-teacher, and the teachers of the third degree and upward.
13. The Vice-Kwancho shall assist the Kwancho and take part in the affairs of the sect.
14. If the Kwancho is prevented by circumstances from being present, the Vice-Kwancho shall act as his representative.



15. The method of succession of Kwancho and appointment of Vice-Kwancho are set forth in the rules.

#### Subsection II. Head Office and Branches

16. The head office of Konko-kyo, the religious affairs of which are superintended by the Kwancho, shall be located at Otani, Miwa mura, Asaguchi-gun, in Okayama Prefecture.
17. Branches shall be established in the Divisions and transact the affairs of the Divisions. The locations of the branch offices are prescribed in the rules.
18. A Division shall consist of one Prefecture, or several Prefectures with a combined total of at least fifteen churches.
19. If a Prefecture contains less than fifteen churches, it may be placed under the control of a neighboring Prefecture by order of the Kwancho. But if several adjoining Prefectures have a combined total of less than fifteen churches they may be united in one Division only when a neighboring Prefecture has more than fifteen churches.
20. The local governments shall be notified of the establishment of branches.
21. The organization of the Head Office, and Branch Offices, with all necessary provisions, are determined by the rules.

#### Subsection III. Congress

22. The Congress shall consist of members specially chosen by the Kwancho, and members elected from the Divisions.

The regulations for the election of members are described in the rules.

23. The Congress shall vote upon the rules, the estimates of revenue and expenditure, all matters upon which its vote is required by the provisions and rules, and all matters relating to the affairs of the sect upon which its vote is deemed necessary by the Kwancho.
24. The Congress may make proposals to the Kwancho about all the affairs of the religion.
25. Bills shall be presented to the Congress by the Kwancho, but a bill may be initiated by the Congress by the consent of more than five members.
26. There shall be regular and special meetings of the Congress. The former shall be called annually and the latter at the discretion of the Kwancho.
27. The Congress shall have the following officers: one President, one Vice-president, and several clerks.
28. The president and vice-president shall be elected by vote of the members. Their terms of office shall correspond to their terms of membership. The clerks shall be appointed from among the petty officials of the Head Office.
29. The president shall arrange the docket and shall report the resolutions of Congress to the Kwancho. In the absence of the president the vice-president shall represent his affairs. The clerks shall perform general duties under the direction of the Kwancho.

30. Congress cannot pass a bill unless at least two-thirds of the members are present. A majority vote decides, and if the affirmative and negative votes are equal the deciding vote is cast by the president.
31. The Kwancho and the personnel under his direction may be present at the Congress and may make proposals but may not vote.
32. The term of membership shall be four years, one half being elected every two years. The half which is to compose the first congress is elected by drawing.
33. Besides the foregoing articles, necessary provisions relating to the Congress are found in the rules.

### Chapter III

#### Treasury

34. The revenue and expenditures of the Head Office shall be fixed annually by budget. The accounts of the Head Office must be submitted annually to Congress for its approval.
35. The expenses of the Head Office are collected by the Kwancho from the churches under his control, or from their teachers. The system of assessments to meet the expenditures is contained in the rules.
36. If a budget fails to pass in Congress the budget of the previous year shall apply.
37. If Congress cannot be convened, in cases where the safety of the religion is involved, the Kwancho may take



expedient measures at his own discretion, relative to the treasury.

38. The treasuries of the Branches shall be independent of the Head Office.
39. The treasuries of the Churches shall be independent of the Head Office, and the Branches.
40. The head of a branch may collect the necessary expenses for his branch, through levies upon the churches under his control, or upon the teachers under his control, with the permission of the Kwancho in accordance with the rules.
41. The budget of revenue and expenditure for a branch is made out by its head and executed with the permission of the Kwancho, who may order its amendment when he deems it necessary.
42. Additional regulations relating to the treasury are found in the rules.

#### Chapter IV

##### Churches

43. Each church shall have a sacred hall in which the Gods named in Article 2 shall be enshrined; the rights shall be performed, and inquirers shall be permitted to worship; and propagation of the religion shall be carried on.
44. Each church must provide a shrine dedicated to the

spirits of the Ancestors of the teachers and believers (Soreiden).

45. The churches shall be classified in three categories, The Great Church, Churches, and Small Churches.
46. The Great Church is the one established at Otani, Miwamura, Asaguchi-gun, Okayama Prefecture. This should be the model for all the churches.
47. The establishment of a church shall require the permission of the Kwancho, and of the Competent Public Authorities.
48. Besides the preceding articles, regulations for the construction of the Saiden, and Soreiden, and other provisions relating to the church buildings are found in the rules.

## Chapter V

### Teachers

49. The ranks and titles of the teachers shall be as follows:

Rank	Title
1 .....	Taikyosei (Greater Preceptor)
2 .....	Gontaikyosei (Sub-Greater Preceptor)
3 .....	Chukyosei (Intermediate Preceptor)
4 .....	Gonchukyosei (Sub-Intermediate Preceptor)
5 .....	Shokyosei (Lesser Preceptor)
6 .....	Gonshokyosei (Sub-Lesser Preceptor)
7 .....	Taikogi (Great Lecturer)

- 8 ..... Gontaikogi (Sub-Great Lecturer)
  - 9 ..... Chukogi (Intermediate Lecturer)
  - 10 ..... Gonchukogi (Sub-Intermediate Lecturer)
  - 11 ..... Shokogi (Lesser Lecturer)
  - 12 ..... Gonshokogi (Sub-Lesser Lecturer)
  - 13 ..... Kundo (Teacher)
  - 14 ..... Gonkundo (Sub-Teacher)
  - 15 ..... Kyoshi-shiho (Candidate teachers)
50. The teachers shall perform the ceremonies and propagate the religion. They may be appointed to the personnel of the Head Office in accordance with the rules and provisions.
51. The qualifications and methods of appointment of the teachers are provided for in the rules.
52. The regulations regarding the dress of teachers are found in the rules.

## Chapter VI

### Believers

53. A Kyoto is a person who believes in this religion, belongs to one of the churches, commits his funeral to the church, and helps in the maintenance of the sect and its churches.
54. A Shinto is a person who believes in this religion, belongs to one of the churches, and helps in the maintenance of the sect, and its churches.



55. The Kyoto and Shinto must be obedient to the instructions of the Kwancho.
56. A list of the believers must be kept in each church.
57. Besides these articles, other necessary regulations relating to believers are set forth in the rules.

## Chapter VII

### Rewards and Punishments

58. Teachers and believers whose conduct has been praiseworthy are rewarded by two grades of rewards. The First Grade is called Shoshi, and the Second Grade is called Hoshi.
59. Shoshi is a certificate of merit accompanied by money or other gift, and is awarded to those of distinguished conduct.
60. Hoshi is a certificate of merit.
61. If a person who is to receive a reward dies, the reward shall be bestowed upon the bereaved family. A teacher's grade may be raised after his death, under certain circumstances.
62. Teachers whose conduct has been evil are punished as follows:

Dismissal from post.

Degrading of rank. (A teacher may be degraded from one to three degrees.)

Suspension from office. (A teacher may be suspended from performing his office for from one to twelve months.)

The above are called the heavy punishments.

Reprimand. (A teacher is reprimanded and confined at home up to a week.)

This is called light punishment.

63. The kinds of conduct to which these rewards and punishments are to apply and the provisions for exercising them are described in the rules.
64. If the conduct of a punished person is considered to be remarkably amended, the Kwancho may repeal or reduce the punishment. This provision does not apply to a person who is punished for the violation of a government ordinance.

### Chapter VIII

#### Miscellaneous Rules

65. Besides its missionary propaganda, this sect may undertake public enterprises, with the permission of the Competent Public Authorities.
66. If deemed necessary this sect may unite with other sects and manage them, with the permission of the Competent Public Authorities.
67. If it is deemed necessary to supplement or change this constitution it may be done only when at least two-thirds of the members of the Congress are present and by the consent of at least two-thirds of the members at the Congress, and the approval of the Government.

68. At the order of the Competent Public Authorities (of the Home Department of the Government) the Kwanchō may supplement or change the constitution and the rules without following the processes stipulated therein.

The constitution speaks for itself. Little criticism need be offered. The first thing I should like to criticize is the metaphysical gymnastics employed in Chapter I, Section 2. After having read what was said in Section I of this discussion relative to the Konko idea of God, and having seen there that the sect worships only one God, the reader is probably somewhat surprised to read in Chapter I of the constitution that the sect is organized to enshrine three deities, viz, the Sun Goddess, the Moon God, and the God of Brightness. This is explained by the present leaders of the sect as being only a political move on the part of the organizers in order to secure the recognition of the Department of Shinto of the Government. Only thus could they make their proposition acceptable to the powers that be. Thus, whereas according to the Constitution, the God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth is a combination of the famous Sun-Goddess (first imperial Ancestress), the Moon-God and the God of Brightness, in the faith of the believers he is a distinct individual, with no relation to any other gods mentioned in the constitution. I do not believe that any, excepting only a few of the officials and leading clergy of the church, have ever heard



of this analysis of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami into the Sun-Goddess, Moon-God and God of Brightness. It is only an analysis on a piece of paper for the sake of getting by a difficult place in the task of organization, and registration with the government. To the formulators of the Constitution this did not seem incongruous, since they do recognize the other deities. Had they believed in the existence of only the one God, whose spirit they wished to enshrine, it would likely have required a little maltreatment of the conscience to represent him as a combination of several deities, whose existence they did not recognize. However, since the existence of all other Gods is recognized, the organizers of the religion probably had little trouble with their consciences, over the problem of analyzing their God into constituent parts, each of which would be recognized by the Government. This they were willing to do for the advantages which proper registration and government recognition would bring to their development. But since, in their actual faith, Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami is no such composite being at all, for the promulgators to have placed the religion on its own merits and allowed it to fight for the right to live, and to have won that right, as Christianity, for example, has done would have made it far more worthy of our admiration.

When we come to examine the organization itself we find a Congress working along with, but often in subservience to, a Chief Superintendent (Kwancho). The resolutions of the Congress often take the form of recommendations to the Kwancho,

rather than of laws. Bills may be presented to Congress by the Kwancho, or may be initiated by Congress by the agreement of more than five members. The chief matters of business assigned to the Congress by the constitution are the budget for the ensuing year; the approval of the expenditures of the preceding year; and all other matters regarding which the Kwancho may desire to consult with it. The amount of business transacted by it would naturally depend much upon the Kwancho, but it is not expected to be very great since but one regular meeting is provided for. During the whole of the remainder of the year the work is carried on by the Kwancho, unless he deems it wise to call a special meeting of Congress.

This temporal head of the church has far more power than either the Congress or the spiritual head (or high priest). The latter's position is only spiritual, and, as such, is a very elevated one. He is the living representative of the founder-god, and as such serves as the head teacher of the mother church, spiritually the highest position in the sect. But into the hands of the Kwancho is entrusted nearly unlimited power in superintending the business of the church. A glance at the constitution shows how varied and how many are his prerogatives. These, although chiefly executive, are by no means only that. While the rules which he may prescribe usually require the consent of Congress, there is reserved to him the right to give orders which replace the written rules and execute such orders immediately. In such cases he

is only subject to the will of the Governmental "Department of Home Affairs."

The Kwancho has the power to judge the quality of the faith of the church members. It would seem as though this should properly have been delegated to the "Spiritual Head" rather than to the Kwancho, since the former should be pre-eminently qualified to judge matters of faith. But this is not so. It is the Kwancho who says whether a believer's faith is right or wrong.

It is he also who wields the power of appointment and dismissal of teachers. This is a tremendous responsibility requiring a thorough knowledge of the whole field and of the teachers, as well as a goodly endowment of tact in dealing with specific situations, where the feeling of individual teachers as well as the good of the church are involved.

Further, the Kwancho has direct power in his relations to the branch treasuries. Each branch has its treasury which is run independently of the main office. But the Kwancho has supervision over them all. The treasurers must submit their estimates of income and expenditure to him, and he may order their amendment "when he deems it necessary." Thus he wields great power over the financial policies of the sect.

He appoints a part of the Congress, the other part being elected to represent the divisions. It is in response to his call that the Congress convenes, and at his word it disbands.



The centralization of power probably makes for efficiency in the management of the affairs of the religion, if it is not in accord with modern democratic principles. Too much democracy in its form of government would undoubtedly be detrimental to its welfare, considering the varied character of the body of the believers, and their low average of training for participation in its management. Thus far the organization has proved its worth by a rapid growth throughout the country. The time may come when it may want to modify itself in the direction of more power in the hands of the Congress, and less in the hands of one man. However, there is no indication of such a change at present, and there is not likely to be any in the near future. The present organization is well adapted to the need.

The reader has undoubtedly noticed the safeguards which the government has placed upon the sect. The Department of Home Affairs is given a strong check upon its policies, and activities. This is not strange. On the contrary it would be strange if it had been otherwise. All the sects of Shinto are closely watched and safeguarded by the government. No change in the constitution or other rules or regulations may be made without the permission of the Government's Department of Home Affairs. No new church may be established without its consent. The Kwancho may not acquire his office without its approval. Thus we see that while much power is given to the Kwancho as chief executive of the sect, there is

a higher power which holds the controlling reins.

In the Constitution certain punishments are referred to, when we search the rules to discover what kinds of behavior are punishable we find the following:

1. Breaking the requirements of the Constitution.
2. Worshipping gods other than those named in the Constitution.
3. Holding services in any other way other than as prescribed in Chapter I, Section 3.
4. Preaching a doctrine different from what is taught in the "Books of Faith."
5. Writing a book explanatory of the scriptures, without permission of the Kwancho.
6. Making a book resembling the scriptures to give to the people.
7. Indulging in conduct harmful to the propagation of the religion.
8. Breaking the laws of the country.

These and other things are listed as punishable behavior. The punishments are graded to suit the weight of the guilt of the offender. These apply only to the teachers. They range from a mere reprimand to dismissal from position.

The rewards apply to teachers and to lay believers as well. Teachers and others, when they have shown exemplary character are rewarded by means of a certificate of merit, or by such a certificate accompanied by money, and sometimes

other gifts. The latter is, of course, a higher reward than the certificate alone. Teachers may be rewarded by having their rank raised. The teacher has an opportunity to climb from the fifteenth rank, when he is still but a candidate, to the first rank. He may be honored after his death by being raised in rank, if while living he had not already reached the highest round of the ladder. This is not peculiar to Konko-kyo, being a common custom of the country, in various walks of life, but especially in civil and military professions.

#### D. The Tenets of Konko-kyo

##### 1. Theological

In Section I the idea of God as expressed in the records of the founder's sayings, and in the writings of present day commentators was set forth. Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami is the ever-present, spiritual Father-God who loves and provides for his children, the human race. In this we can see an unmistakable trace of the Christian view of God. Although the present leaders of the church disclaim any knowledge of Christianity on the part of the founder, one cannot but feel that, whether conscious of the fact or not, he must have been influenced by the Christian conception. He may have studied Christianity purposely, but he could hardly have been a religious thinker in Japan without having been touched by ideas of God which were more or less current and which had had their origin in Christian teachings, and which had been spreading



in the country long before the founder of Konko-kyo began to think on religious themes. He was in all probability unconscious of such influence. Had he come face to face with the Christian teachings about the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, and the Gospel of the Kingdom of God on earth in the hearts of men, he probably would have found in it what satisfied him, and there would have been one sect less in Japan today.

Of course we must admit the possibility of one man, who had never heard of a certain conception of God, arriving at such a conception purely by his own reasoning. The Greek philosophers arrived at nearly the same conception of God as Jesus taught. But while we admit the possibility, we maintain that it is highly improbable that Konko-daijin's conception was a new discovery or revelation. A comparison of some of the passages with Christian Scripture on the same subjects may make the position clear.

In Konko teaching God is called the "source of heaven and earth" and the "Parent of our true being." He is the one who makes things to grow to supply men's needs. In Christian teaching, God is the Maker of heaven and earth, and all that is in them and on them, man, animals and plant life. The God of Konko-kyo is eternally existent and everywhere present. (See passages quoted in Section I.) The God of Christianity is without beginning or end and is omnipresent. In both teachings he is a spiritual being. In both he is the "Father"

of mankind, and in both man is the "son" of God. In both, the Father is mindful of the needs of his children and worthy of their faith and dependence. In both, God loves man as the human father loves his child. In fact there are so many points of similarity to the Christian conception held by the other religions, in the midst of which Konko-daijin grew up, that the natural inference is that he was largely influenced by Christianity. That he could have been thus influenced and at the same time have been unaware of the source of his ideas is quite possible. This would account for his claim to special revelation on the subject. We have said that we believe him to have been honest and sincere. It is possible that he was not well informed. Being a farmer his early life was spent in the hard toil of rotating crops of wheat and rice. While he may never have listened to a Christian sermon or read a Christian book he could very easily have come into contact with some of the ideas which had been working like leaven in Japanese life and thought for several centuries. Although, in his busy life he may not have done much reading, he seems to have done a considerable amount of thinking. There gradually grew up within him a contempt for many of the superstitious practices which so thoroughly dominated the life of the people at that time. Along with his anti-superstition sentiment there began to formulate in his consciousness, from seed which had at some time been planted there, the idea of God which has been described. Faith in

this God would bring freedom from the bondage of superstition in which his fellowmen were bound. He, not being aware that such a God had already been revealed to the world, naturally developed the feeling that he was the one divinely appointed to proclaim to mankind the new life through faith in this God, which had been revealed to him.

But this, of course, is mere speculation, even though it is a speculation with a strong element of likelihood. Had the conception been more complete it might have been one of great value to those who did not meet with it from other sources. Even as it was, it was a great improvement over the popular theological ideas.

But where the Konko theology differs very thoroughly from Christian theology is in its recognition of the other Gods. Judaism, before Christianity, struggled against the polytheism of the surrounding tribes. The prophets sought to clarify in the minds of the people the truth that there is but one God and that him only they should serve. Christianity carried forward this conception further spiritualized and perfected. Christianity proclaims that there can be but one God for the whole world. This one God might be conceived of by different people and in different places with varying degrees of clarity, but he is ever and always one. But neither Konko-daijin nor the organizers of the church made any strong fight against the surrounding polytheism. The nearest to a plea for monotheism which we can find is the



founder's advice to worship Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami, rather than all of the Gods, on the ground that you are more likely to get what you want by concentrating your petitions upon one God. How the worship of deified and other ancestral spirits is not only permitted but required by the Constitution of the church has already been commented upon and will be dealt with more at length later when we criticize the worship of the sect.

In the direction of monotheism Konko-kyo went farther than either Buddhism or Hinduism but not as far as Muhammedanism. Muhammed, though he had no accurate knowledge of either Judaism or Christianity, had some acquaintance with both. His campaign against the idolatrous practices of his country is somewhat like that of the prophets of Israel. He proclaimed the truth of God's Oneness as opposed to the polytheistic beliefs of his time and country. On the other hand the monotheistic tendency in Northern Buddhism is almost negligible when seen at the same glance with the myriads of Gods and Goddesses, mostly of Indian origin, who are worshipped. In Hinduism also a slight trace of monotheism can be seen alongside of the more prevalent worship of many gods. But in both of these latter religions the tendency is so slight by comparison as to be nearly negligible in a general view of the whole system. They are both polytheistic in the extreme. Muhammedanism on the other hand is severely monotheistic and theocratic.

Konko-kyo cannot be said to be monotheistic, because of its tolerant attitude towards all other gods and its deification of ancestral spirits. But in so far as it proclaims the supremacy of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami it is theanthropic rather than theocratic. While Muhammed proclaimed only the stern, austere, over-ruling quality of God, Konko-daijin represented his God in terms of kindness and fatherhood.

In the history of religions there have been these two opposing conceptions of God, termed the theanthropic view and the theocratic view. According to the latter view God is the severe ruler of the universe. Men are his abject slaves with no right to question the will of their Master. He is the supreme sovereign over all. His nature and man's nature are in entirely different categories so that no real communion of the two is possible. According to the theanthropic view, God is possessed of qualities and passions and motives similar to those of man. The flower of the development of this conception is the "Fatherhood of God" idea. The great exponents of the theocratic view are Judaism and Muhammedanism. The theanthropic idea has found wider acceptance, having a stronger appeal to human nature and its spiritual cravings. This view was partially realized in ancient Greece, India and European countries generally. Konko-kyo, in so far as it approaches a monotheistic position approaches it in the theanthropic realm rather than the theocratic. This is rather unusual in Japan where authority and sovereignty are so much emphasized. One

would expect the God of the Konko-kyo to be a stern ruler who demands obedience and complete submission. But such is not the case. If we could forget that all other gods, including deified ancestors, are recognized we should be inclined to say that Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami was a near approach to the Christian conception of God. As it is we can only define the system as an attempt to combine some of the elements in the Christian conception with the anciently recognized system of national and local ancestor worship. This much, I think, can be said, however, that in Konko-kyo, the emphasis has been shifted in the direction of monotheism.

## 2. Anthropological

In every religion there are certain beliefs about man just as there are theories about God. It would be difficult to imagine a religion that had no concern about man's condition, nature and relation to God. If it is argued that Buddhism began in just that way, namely with no concern about man's relation to God, it must be remembered that it did not long remain so. The reach of the human soul is toward that power which is above and beyond itself. It was only when Buddhism ceased to be purely a moral and ethical philosophy and began to reach upward and claim relation to the higher powers that it became a religion. Now, whenever and wherever man's relation to God is contemplated, a theory regarding man's present imperfect condition, and how he may be saved



from it, arises. Religions differ in their theories as to what the trouble is, how serious it is, and how it is to be remedied.

The Christian doctrine about man is, briefly, that he was created in the image of God, but through his own willful sinning against God he drifted into a lost condition, which entails punishment, and is in need of some means of deliverance outside of himself. In the case of Buddhism the great trouble is not sin but suffering. This world is full of suffering and hardship. There is no pure foundation for anything, all things being impermanent and fleeting. Man is composed of a bundle of properties or aggregates called "skandhas" of which there are five categories: (1) material qualities, (2) sensations, (3) abstract ideas, (4) tendencies of mind, (5) mental powers. This theory replaces the body and soul theory of earlier Hindu religion. Every person inherits the "Karma" (sum total of actions) of a previous existence. If a man is in a poor state of health, or an unfortunate economic condition it is because he has inherited the bad Karma of his previous existence. If his circumstances are good it is because he has inherited a good Karma. A man may improve or degrade the Karma which he has inherited and thus pass on to posterity a better or a worse one than he received. Thus man is but a link in an endless chain of suffering and discontent. Muhammedanism accepts the more common soul-theory as regards the nature of man. But it has

no doctrine of sin like that of Christianity. The life of man is so under the control of God that he can do nothing to make his life either better or worse. All things are pre-determined by God and done in accordance with his will and power. Of course man cannot be sinful if he is not a free being.

Now, with this background of beliefs about man's nature and condition in this life, we try to find a place where Konko-kyo will fit in. We find that its doctrine, which is exceedingly brief, is not exactly like any of those described. In general its theory of man's nature is similar to all the others, excepting only the original Buddhistic theory described above, but not excepting the later belief of Mahayana Buddhism which reverted to the soul-theory from which Gautama had departed. Like the latter and Christianity as well as Muhammedanism and Hinduism, Konko-kyo believes in the theory that in man there is a soul which has an existence not necessarily and permanently, though for the present, tied up with the body which it inhabits. This part of man lives on after the body goes into decomposition. It is eternal. This theory in one form or another has been held almost universally. Konko-kyo made no new departure here. It merely accepted what was already believed by a large majority of the human race, and had very little to say about it.

But what Konko-kyo did teach, though in a passive sort of way, was the brotherhood of man. This attitude is the

corollary of the belief in the fatherhood of God. To conceive of God as a spiritual father to the human race and at the same time not conceive of man as man's brother would hardly be possible. So Konko-daijin naturally and consistently accompanied his teachings about the parent-God with suggestions as to how men should look upon their fellowmen. But just as the fatherhood of God is here clearly visualized and less distinctly taught than it is in Christianity, so also is the brotherhood of man. The teaching is far too scant to represent a thoroughly understood and a strongly felt doctrine. Had the doctrine been well defined in the mind of the founder and specially taught by him as an important element in his revelation, it surely would have been stressed by the recorders of his words. At best, all we can find are a few sayings such as "There is no stranger under the sun," the purport of which seems to be that no one should be treated coldly as one might treat a stranger. Treat everyone as though he were an acquaintance. We are to be merciful toward others, not thinking of our own miseries but being mindful of the miseries of other people. "Beware of being ignorant of the miseries of other people, knowing only our own miseries." "Do not treat believers unequally. Do not treat those better who bring presents to you." "Is it not a matter of gratitude that a man can help others?" When we have quoted a few such sayings of the founder we have exhausted the material. The fact is that the teachings about consideration for, and kindly



treatment of, others can only be construed into a doctrine of the brotherhood of man by carrying it to its logical conclusion another doctrine which is more clearly taught, namely that of man's common sonship.

There can be no question about the founder's intention to express man's relation to God in terms of sonship. This was shown in Section I. There is nothing to suggest that this conceived relationship is anything but a spiritual one. In this it resembles the Christian conception. In this it reaches its nearest approach to Christianity. This corollary to the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is more clearly and intentionally taught than the other logical corollary, the brotherhood of man. Had not the parent and child relationship been employed in making clear man's relation to God, the brotherhood of man theory could not be read into the passages quoted above. While in Konko-kyo, the teaching is far less distinct than in Christianity, it is worthy of mention as a good point in the religion, for it is by no means a commonly taught doctrine among the great religions of the world. If the founder got his inspiration for this teaching from any existing religion it must have been from Christianity. That he did receive it from Christianity cannot be surely claimed. That he might very well have, and quite probably did receive it, though perhaps unconsciously, from Christianity, is the writer's personal opinion. But whether derived from Christianity or not the idea is a good one. That is the conception

of man's relation to God which makes the strongest appeal to the human heart.

But what about this child of God? He is by no means a model child. Konko-kyo represents him as being comparatively ignorant of the Father's love and blessings; ungrateful for even those blessings which he does realize; bound in the thongs of superstition; and withal conceited in himself. This picture of man has in it striking elements of truth. Thus far its conception of what is the matter with man is good. But this is about the extent of its doctrine of sin. It has no well developed doctrine of sin and the effects of sin, such as is usually taught in connection with Christian anthropology. The only ill effect of, or inconvenience in connection with, these sins, is man's failure to receive the highest blessings of God as long as he is unsaved from them. They are their own punishment. This does not resemble any other doctrine that I am aware of. It differs materially from the Christian doctrine both in what constitutes sin and in the importance attached to it. In the Christian view sin has eternal consequences. If persisted in to the end it makes communion with God impossible. All men are sinners. There are saved sinners and unsaved sinners. Sin is not a matter, only or primarily, of acts, but of attitudes, thoughts and affections. Those who have received salvation are freed from the dire results of sin. In Konko-kyo, however, no such importance is attached to sin and no such heart-searching

standards are set up. The man who remains in such a state of ignorance, ingratitude, and superstition is only to be pitied because he is foregoing the highest blessings of God.

Again, Konko-kyo differs, in this regard, from Buddhism also. According to Gautama the thing that man needs to be saved from is suffering. An endless round of existences, in which he is never free from suffering and sorrow and disappointment, is the condition of man from which he must seek deliverance. A list of ten qualities is given which in part corresponds to what in Christian teaching would be called sins. There are (1) the delusion of self, (2) doubt (of the teacher, the doctrine and the Order), (3) reliance on the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, (4) the bodily lusts or passions, (5) hatred and illfeeling, (6) desire for future life in the world of forms, (7) desire for future life in the formless worlds, (8) pride, (9) self-righteousness and (10) ignorance. (Rhys Davids in S.B.E., p. 223ff.) But these were not considered by Gautama as being of the nature of sins. They were merely fetters, or hinderances, to the attainment of freedom from suffering. Mahayana Buddhism has developed a doctrine of sin with dire results which are pictured by the painter most startlingly in terms of flames, devils and spears. But this too differs entirely from Konko teaching.

If we make the comparison with Muhammedanism we meet with differences again. While it is true that the latter has no well developed doctrine of sin, it has nevertheless a very



strong doctrine of damnation for unbelief. And Muhammedans do have a sense of sin. If in Konko-kyo the ignorance of God's grace, ingratitude and conceit spoken of can be called sins and are recognized as such, we must admit that the religion has a doctrine of sin. If we were to admit this we should still have to differentiate from Muhammedanism in as much as the latter postulates dire results for unbelief while the former does not.

### 3. Soteriological

The Konko idea of salvation has been stated at length in Section I. The criticisms of those teachings will follow, in part, the order in which the subject was treated there.

The founder of the religion holds an entirely important, although by no means unique, position. When his place in the scheme of salvation is considered in the light of religious history we find nothing new in it. His office as revealer of God to men has many parallels in other religions. The place which Muhammed claimed for himself as prophet of Allah includes the office of revealer. He felt it his divine calling to reveal to men that there is but one God. This knowledge was to be given to men as a part of their salvation. In being the chosen one to impart this knowledge to men, Muhammed believed himself to be the key to man's salvation. If we make the comparison with Christianity the similarity is again very striking. It is generally believed by Christians

that Jesus has given the fullest and most perfect revelation of God to the world and that this knowledge of God is a necessary element in their salvation. Other comparisons could be drawn which would show similar situations. The two mentioned are the most noteworthy for their similarity to Konko-kyo. In each case the founder considered it his mission to reveal to his fellow men the true nature of God, and in each case that knowledge of God is an important element in salvation.

When we consider Konko-daijin as a mediator between God and men the resemblance of this claim to that of Jesus becomes distinct. Jesus said and Christianity holds that "no man can come to the Father but by me." Jesus' disciples preached that "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Identical with this is the claim of the disciples of Konko-daijin who, today, are developing the doctrines of the Konko Church. Their claim is that while men, in all ages have sought God and the true way of life, all have utterly failed until these were revealed to Konko-daijin. He being the first to attain unto this knowledge, and having himself found true union with God, is the one to whom all must look for assistance in the search for God and the true way of life. He reveals the way and he mediates for man. In fact his mediatorial powers are more extensive than those ascribed to Jesus, either by himself or his disciples. Nowhere in Christian scriptures are believers

taught to pray directly to Jesus. They are taught to pray to God in the name of Jesus. But in Konko teaching there is at least one very distinct instruction that it is not necessary in all cases to pray to God but that in some cases prayer may be directed to Konko-daijin directly and he will grant the petition. This has a parallel in the practice of Maryolatory in the Roman Church. But it has a more valid excuse than Maryolatory, for Konko-daijin exalted himself to a very high position theologically, and was almost immediately deified by his disciples. So it is a perfectly natural sequence that prayer should be directed to him. In the case of Mary, on the other hand, there is no scriptural basis for her being worshipped. It is merely a fungus growth, permitted and fostered by the superstition and ignorance of a corrupt church. When we compare the case of Konko-daijin to Mary we must not lose sight of this important difference.

A still more striking parallel to Konko-kyo, in the matter of the mediatorship of the founder, is to be seen in India in Sikhism. Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, represented God in much the same terms as did Konko-daijin, as an ever present spiritual Providence who can be approached by men, through the mediatorship of a divinely appointed teacher. The founder, in each case, is that teacher. In Sikhism he is called the Guru. The Guruship was passed on to his successors by Nanak just as the high-priesthood is passed on to the successors of Konko-daijin. Nanak, like Konko-daijin, magnified



his office into one of mediatorship between God and man.

In Persia Babism furnishes another parallel. The Babs were looked upon as intermediaries between the hidden Imam and his church, just as Konko-daijin is believed to be the mediator between Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami and all believers. There are points of difference such as in the method of succession but the general position of the one is very similar to that of the other.

In Judaism the prophets held a similar position. They were not only revealers of God's true nature, and preachers of righteousness but, in many cases, direct agents of God in dealing with the Hebrew Nation. This mediatorial office is most vividly illustrated in the case of Moses. In many cases the powers of the Jewish mediators were far more extensive than those of Konko-daijin. They were leaders of the people in war and in peaceful material pursuits, whereas the founder of Konko-kyo is mediator only in spiritual affairs. This does not mean that he had nothing to say about material things. It means that his office of mediator applies only in the spiritual realm.

If we compare Konko-kyo with Buddhism in the matter of revealership and mediatorship of the founder of the scheme of salvation, one difference at once appears. Gautama was neither a revealer of God nor an intermediary between God and men. He made no claim to be such. In his mind the gods had no particular connection with the scheme of salvation, except

that they, as well as all men, might become recipients of it. Whereas Konko-daijin claimed to be God's chosen agent in making known to men the content and method of salvation, Gautama claimed to be an agent only of his own enlightened consciousness, in dispensing his self-discovered salvation to both Gods and men. Even in the case of the later development of Buddhism, in which Gautama Buddha takes a secondary place, it is not as an intermediary but merely one of an indefinite number of incarnations of the "Original Buddha of Enlightenment." In no case does he assume the office of mediator between any being higher than himself, and men. Neither Gautama nor, in the case of Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddha of whom he is an incarnation takes, assumes, or is assigned a place lower than or subsidiary to the Gods. Salvation is of Buddha and even the Gods may receive it if they will. This is an important difference from Konko-kyo, in whose plan of salvation the founder holds a distinctly subsidiary and intermediary position. The God of Brightness of heaven and earth is possessor of all blessings, and holds salvation in his own hands. It is only as God's chosen agent that Konko-daijin has brought salvation to mankind.

In its application of salvation to the present life, while recognizing also the future life, Konko-kyo bears a strong resemblance to Christianity. Both represent the present aspect of salvation. Both hold the belief in personal immortality, but Konko-kyo has less to say about the

part of life which lies beyond death than is said in Christian scriptures. There is no attempt to portray the future of the saved in symbols such as are penned by John the Mystic. That the souls of the saved settle before God in purity is about all of the future life that the founder had knowledge of. Although this is not clearly explained, in some of the writings it sounds as though an absorption of the human soul into the divine is meant. Whether or not Konko-kyo will pass through a period in its development during which the emphasis will change, as it did in Christianity, to the future aspect of salvation, and produce a more elaborate doctrine of the future life, is a matter which history will tell. We can only criticize its present condition. That condition we find to be a rather healthy emphasis of the application of salvation to the life that now is. If it be said that the point is one of difference, rather than similarity, because of Christianity's other-worldliness it must be remembered that, even though the medieval church did develop an undue stress upon the future life, the message of Jesus was primarily concerned with a Kingdom of righteousness on this earth and in the life of the present. The church is returning to that position. So the point is, in reality, one of strong similarity.

Turning to Buddhism we find that while it has a far more thorough and a stronger moral and ethical code than Konko-kyo, it also has a keener eye upon the future life. In



fact the prevailing motive of early Buddhism was escape from the endless series of future lives to which all human beings fall heir. No small part of the practical and this-worldly-side of the religion has as its aim and purpose, escape from the hereafter. Herein lies one of the chief points of variance with Konko-kyo. The latter, of course, recognizes a connection between the acts of this life and the future state, but it does not make that future state the main objective of the present course of action. Salvation is not primarily an escape from future punishment, but a new life which begins now and, incidentally, does not end with the event known as death.

The same difference exists between Konko-kyo and the later Buddhism in which the soul-theory of man replaced Gautama's skhanda-theory, and salvation in the land of bliss took the place of Nirvana. In this form of Buddhism also salvation is more for the sake of escape from future tortures in "jikoku" and of happiness in the Land of Bliss, than for the present life.

In Muhammedanism also salvation is chiefly a thing of the future life.

Thus we see that whether the comparison is made with Christianity, Buddhism, or Muhammedanism, in each case Konko-kyo places a proportionately slight emphasis upon the future life as the aim of salvation. This fact in itself is a mark of superiority. As the stronghold of Christianity in this

generation is its emphasis upon the social gospel, so we may expect, also, that the emphasis of Konko-kyo upon the present, practical aspect of salvation will recommend the religion to many people in Japan. Its successful beginning and rapid growth are no doubt due in part to this factor.

It was stated in the discussion of man's nature and condition that Konko-kyo had no well developed doctrine of sin. In keeping with the absence of such a doctrine is its teaching of universal salvation. In this the sect departs from the teaching of nearly all other religions. Muhammedanism damns all unbelievers. Buddhism has its hell. The ancient religion of India had its endless rebirths. Greece and Rome had their dark underworlds. Christianity has its doctrine of future retribution interpreted with varying degrees of literalism and of figurativeness. The Konko-kyo resembles a sect of Christianity which is universalist in its doctrine of salvation. There is no future punishment. All are eventually saved, whether they are members of the Konko Church or not. Those who die without being saved, that is without having become believers in the teaching and members of the church, during their lives, enter a sort of purgatory like that of Roman Catholic Christianity, from whence, they go, purified, into the presence of God. Hence those who either do not have knowledge of, or refuse to enter upon the true way of life in this world, only forfeit the special blessings which are the prerogative of the saved in this life. Purgatory, about which

there is but a very hazy idea, seems not to be a place of suffering or punishment, but only of waiting for the application of the means of grace. This idea did not have its origin in the teachings of the founder but arose, I believe, as the disciple endeavored to answer the questions of enquirers as to how those who have not become believers were to be saved. At any rate the doctrine of purgatory holds no very important place in the whole system. The really important factor in the eschatological teaching is that of universal salvation.

It was noted in Section I that the primary essential in the matter of receiving salvation is faith. For those who receive salvation in this life, with all the special blessings which it includes, it is by their own faith in the grace and virtue of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami as revealed to them, and made available to them by Konko-daijin. For those who die without having accepted the faith for themselves, it is by the grace of God responding to the faith of relatives, friends or teachers of the church. In either case it is by faith, one's own faith or the vicarious faith of another, in the virtue and grace of the God of Brightness of heaven and earth, as mediated by the founder of the religion.

The striking resemblance to Christianity at this point need only be mentioned. In a simple statement of this belief, if Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami be called God and Christ substituted for Konko-daijin one might very easily imagine he



were reading a fairly accurate statement of the Christian doctrine of salvation by faith. That the founder was influenced by Christian teaching extant in the country seems quite probable. But that such doctrine might very well have been formulated by him, without having heard the Christian teaching, is entirely possible. He may have derived it from Amida Buddhism in which salvation by faith replaced the salvation by works as taught by Gautama. Whether or not this element in later Buddhism can be traced to Christian influence for its origin is, of course, only a matter for speculation, but carries a strong element of probability. So that, on the whole, it seems likely that Konko-kyo owes this doctrine to Christian influence, directly or indirectly. However, for any who do object, on general principles, to finding the origins of all good things in Christianity, it might be admitted here that even though it were Konko-daijin's own original idea, it is a good one.

This teaching might be contrasted with the teaching of Gautama Buddha in which salvation is wholly by one's personal efforts acquiring the Knowledge of the "Four Noble Truths" and following the "Noble Eightfold Path." Gautama forbade faith in the Gods and even faith in himself. Each disciple was taught to lean upon himself and upon no higher being. He must meditate upon the Four Noble Truths until he fully grasps their meaning and significance. Failure to know these truths is the cause of continued existence. "But when

those noble truths are grasped and known, the craving for existence is rooted out, that which leads to renewed existence is destroyed, and then there is no more birth." The way which leads to this destruction of desire for renewed existence is the Noble Eightfold Path, the following of which requires one to overcome the "Ten Fetters." And this is all a matter of one's own strenuous efforts. By overcoming these fetters, one can successfully follow out the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the extinction of the thirst or desire which are at the root of continued existence, and leads to Nirvana. This was Gautama's idea of salvation and the way to find it. As different from Konko-kyo as it is in the idea of what constitutes salvation, it is also in the method by which it is to be attained. In the one, salvation is entirely by self-effort. In the other it is by faith, in Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami as he is revealed by Konko-daijin, and by faith in the efficacy of the latter's mediatorship.

To this may be compared the Muhammedan method of salvation which consists of the acceptance of the Creed. All you need to do is to accept the statement that there is but one God, Allah, and Muhammed is his prophet. All who accept this are saved, all who reject it are damned. There is far less of the element of faith in this than in the Konko-kyo method of salvation. In the latter true faith is stressed, whereas, in this scheme, a mere intellectual assent to the creed is sufficient.

Thus, in the matter of the method of salvation, we see that in the field of the world's great religions Konko-kyo bears the strongest resemblance to Christianity, with perhaps Amida Buddhism second and Muhammedanism third. Original Buddhism, with its middle path of contemplation and effort, as well as the more ancient Indian systems in which contemplation and other extreme ascetic practices play so noticeable a part are in a totally different category. The latter belong to the 'salvation by works' group. Konko-kyo belongs to the group characterized by the belief in salvation by faith.

Yet, there is one striking difference between Konko-kyo and Christianity, even though faith is so strongly emphasized in the matter of salvation. In Christianity the faith of the believer is directed toward Christ in a different way from that in which the Konko-believer's faith is directed to Konko-daijin. In the case of the former it is faith in the power and efficacy of Christ's stoning death which saves. In the latter no power outside of self is needed. Man only needs to realize his oneness with God to be saved. Where faith comes into play is in accepting the teachings of the founder; in believing that he found that complete union and that he has shown the way by which all may find it. That is an entirely different matter from placing faith in the power of another. So when we say that Konko-kyo, like Christianity is a religion of salvation by faith this difference should be kept in mind.



#### 4. Ethical and Philosophical

Little must be said about the ethical and philosophical teachings which were briefly described in Section I. Both are very brief. The duties to self, family, society and country are extremely simple. The teachings these relationships contain nothing new or striking. They are far less elaborate than those of Confucius and in no way superior to them. Compared with the elaborate and thorough going ethics of Christianity they appear rather meager.

No system of philosophy can ever be built upon the teachings of the founder. The philosophical speculations of Mr. Norito Sato, though based largely upon sayings of the founder can scarcely be called a system of philosophy since they cover such a limited range of subjects. The possible union between man and God by virtue of their oneness of nature and essence, and the way by which the union may be reached, comprise the bulk of the philosophical considerations. Of course there is philosophy in almost everything and there is naturally much of it in all of the theological and soteriological teachings of Konko-kyo. But as for a distinct system of philosophy, covering the usual range of subjects, there is none. The fanciful application of the terms "great heaven and earth" and "small heaven and earth" to God and man respectively, and the definition of religion as the attempt to find a way in the "small heaven and earth" to reach the Reason which is in the "great heaven and earth"

is not conducive to clarity. They do not come as near to satisfying the mind as the ordinary definitions of God, man, and religion.

### E. Worship

When we come to consider the worship of Konko-kyo comparatively, we find some striking contrasts and resemblances. In the external features of its worship, this religion does not differ materially from Buddhism or most Shinto sects. The hand-clapping in private and public worship is common to all Shinto sects. It would seem a mistake for Konko-kyo to retain this custom, since it presupposes a view of God presumably not held by the church. Holding as it does a spiritual view of the nature of God it would seem to be in keeping with this view to drop this custom, which is so nicely in keeping with older Shinto views. Yet, it is a perfectly natural thing that the custom should be retained. Being an ancient form by which respect was expressed toward an Emperor or some superior person, it grew up with the worship of the Gods who were supposed to hear and see the same as human beings. Since it came, by centuries of rise, to be ingrained in the character as the symbol of highest respect both in human relations and in the worship of the Gods it is not unnatural that it should be retained as a symbol of the reverence and awe held in the heart for the spiritually conceived God who needs no such visible, physical

expression of respect. Since Konko-kyo is organized and registered as a Shinto Church it is all the more natural that the general Shinto custom of hand-clapping should be retained.

Buddhism does not maintain this custom. The corresponding gesture in the latter is rubbing the palms of the hands together which is symbolic of petition. The worshipper must remember whether he is at a temple or a shrine; whether he is worshipping a Shinto God or a Buddhist deity. The same person may walk directly from Buddhist worship to Shinto and must remember to change his gesture. Christianity has to some extent adopted itself to Japanese temperament and expression and it would not have been surprising to find many Christians preceeding their prayer by hand-clapping. But such is not the case. I have neither seen nor heard of a Japanese Christian retaining the custom.

From the external appearance of its great festivals (matsuri) Konko-kyo resembles the rest of Shinto. A crowd of people around and in the vicinity of the shrine; men, women, and children walking hither and thither; counters heaped with fruits, toys, soft drinks and various and sundry things for sale; people buying, playing and eating; priests in the shrine performing a ceremony; a part of the crowd, especially those nearest, giving their attention to the service. In these general appearances there is nothing to distinguish the Konko-kyo festival from any Shinto or Buddhist matsuri. A closer view of the ceremony would reveal the fact that the priests



were wearing Shinto robes, not Buddhist. The purification ceremony, the norito, the offerings and all that go to make up the service could not be distinguished, by the inexperienced observer, from those of any Shinto festival. One cannot help thinking that it is all purposely made to conform to Shinto rites so that converts can accept its new teachings without breaking with the old accepted ways. It is putting new wine in old bottles.

But when we get beyond the great festival, in our comparison, we find points of dissimilarity. In the weekly and monthly services held in many Konko churches there is a point in advance over the old Shinto custom. This is in conformity, however, with the growing tendency in Japan for frequent gatherings for instruction of children in the faith. In this respect both Buddhism and some sects of Shinto have received example and inspiration from Christianity. The Buddhist Sunday Schools illustrate this tendency. It is a good tendency. It tends to keep alive in the public mind as well as in the lives of people individually the fact and claims of religion and has a good moral effect upon the community, providing the religion has anything good and helpful to offer through such frequent gatherings.

In the absence of physical representations of the deity in the places of worship, Konko-kyo differs from most other sects of Shinto and from Buddhism. This is a long step in the direction of a spiritualized view of God. Where

images or other physical representations of a deity are present and exposed to the view of the worshippers, it is more than can be expected that the average unphilosophical mind should have an entirely spiritual conception of God. And in fact such a conception is not found in which deity is physically represented. All of the ancient gods of Japan are naturalistic and anthropomorphic. In Buddhism also the millions of stone, wood, and metal idols which adorn the temples and the roadsides, stand as obstacles to the growth of a spiritual conception of God. But in connection with Konko-kyo worship there are no idols. The only physical emblem in the shrine is a small mat on the floor, which is symbolic of the presence of the deity, in the same way as to the western mind a chair might be conceived to symbolize the spiritual presence of God.

While a large advance is made in the doing away with images it would seem that more would have been accomplished in the direction of a purely spiritual conception of God, if the mat, too, had been left out of the sanctuary. A small mat lying on the floor surely cannot be latent with possibilities of serious hindrance to the highest conception of God. And yet it probably is somewhat of a drawback. A mat is to be sat upon, and when people face toward this mat in the shrine, the tendency is to visualize a being with physical properties sitting upon it. The entire absence of any physical symbol surely would be more conducive to a purely spiritual conception

of God. This same objection might very well be raised to the use of the crucifix in the Roman Catholic branch of the Christian religion. There can be no doubt that many indiscriminating people worship the image with very little real conception of Christ. This objection could hardly be raised against the use of the cross as a symbol in Christian worship because it is not a symbol of God or of Christ and, therefore, does not stand in the way of the spiritual vision. It is a symbol, rather, of the death of Jesus, primarily, and by the process of generalization, of the whole content of the Christian religion. But in the case of the mat in the Konko shrine, it requires a philosophical mind to look at it and then maintain a purely spiritual conception of the God of whose presence it is supposed to be symbolical. Since most minds are trained only in practical affairs and are not skilled in metaphysical discriminations, it would seem that a still further advance could have been made in the direction of a proper conception of a spiritual God if this symbol, so closely associated in all of life with physical presence, had been omitted from the shrine.

Still more out of harmony with the sects theoretically spiritual idea of God, is its continuance of the ancient practice of food and drink offerings. The offerings presented to the God at the great festival, which is described in Section I were numerous and lavish. The sixteen courses each were composed of a quantity of food or drink far greater than any



normal human being could consume in one meal. For generosity it excelled anything which I have yet seen in the way of offerings. Furthermore a great deal of time was consumed in presenting these lavish gifts. If the ceremony is only to express the thanksgiving of the people for the blessings which they have received, then a small quantity offered with a prayer of thanks would serve the purpose. If it be objected that a small quantity would indicate a small degree of thankfulness the answer would be that the quantity offered has no relation to the degree of thankfulness since it goes back to the offerers again after it has remained for a sufficient length of time before the God.

But not even a small quantity is necessary. A God who has no physical qualities needs no food and drink placed before him. True thankfulness is of the heart and can not be proved by offerings which come back to the giver. Nor does it need to be proved to a spiritual God who discerns the true heart of man. In this practice, again, the worship of Konko-kyo is not quite in keeping with the conception of God which it theoretically holds.

The case of money offerings is in a different category. All religions have a place for offerings of money. That in many cases the offering of money is a cheap price paid for good which the giver expects to receive is a well known fact. But that people give of their money as an expression of their feeling of thankfulness is a fact to be remembered also. A

spiritual God would be more likely to appreciate, as a thanksgiving offering, money which would be utilized to relieve starvation or other sufferings of human beings, or to support some organization beneficial to the human race, than an offering of food which he himself would have no use for, and which would afterward be distributed in minute quantities to a large number who would consume it for its imbibed sacredness rather than because they need it to relieve their hunger.

It may be said to the credit of Konko-kyo that animal sacrifices are not indulged in. But in this it made no new departure. Animal sacrifice has long been obsolete in Japan. There is plenty of evidence of it in ancient Japan but under Buddhist influence it became very rare. Had the Konko organizers borrowed as freely from Judaism as did Muhammed they might have found use for animal sacrifice. But fortunately, Konko-kyo escaped that practice.

The ancient practice of ancestor worship is left unaltered by Konko-kyo. This practice was too thoroughly ingrained in the life and habits of the Japanese people to be outgrown by or abandoned by any religion having its origin on Japanese soil and its roots in Japanese mind. The only religion in the country today which does not countenance ancestor worship is Christianity. As such it has no place for the practice, but not a few Japanese Christians continue practices which border very nearly on ancestor worship but

only reverence and respect. This claim is made by some people, of the educated class, for all ancestor worship. So the trained leaders of the Konko church also argue. This however is only a splitting of hairs and does not alter the facts. People of philosophically trained intellects may be able to go through the same forms as are used in worship, while bowing before the tombstone or tablet of an ancestor and do no more than pay their respects. But there is no question but that the average, and the below average, untrained mind makes no such discrimination. No matter what theorists may claim, the great mass of the Japanese people do worship their departed ancestors and deified heroes. In this respect Konko-kyo made no departure from the ancient and recognized practice. The ancestral tablets are on the god-shelf (Kami-dana) in the home, together with the miniature shrine of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami and are also enshrined in every Konko Church in the country, and are worshipped by the common people, regardless of the metaphysical distinctions of the educated.

The failure of Konko-kyo, with its purported advanced religious ideas, to step out of this ancient and beaten track is one of its greatest faults. The importance of ancestor worship in Japanese private and official life, and the acceptance of the custom by Konko-kyo, call for a description of the system at this point.

With regard to the origin of ancestor worship two opposing views have been advanced. One view is that ancestor



worship had its beginning in the fear of the ghosts of those who have passed beyond. The other view is that it had its origin in the love and respect of the living for the spirits of those who have departed. Each of these two theories has been held to the exclusion of the other. Those who favor the first of these views argue that the offerings made to the spirits of departed ancestors were for the purpose of propitiating them, and securing for the giver, immunity from evils which the departed spirit might inflict upon him. This theory assumes that primitive peoples would naturally fear their spirit ancestors, and expect bad treatment at their hands. Those who favor the other theory argue that primitive peoples loved and respected their living parents and it is therefore unreasonable to assume that they would fear them after death. They hold it to be a fairer assumption that they would continue to love and respect the spirits of those whom they loved while living. The offerings of rice, 'sake,' flowers, and incense made to them, as well as the pilgrimages to their tombs and the bowing before their tombs and all that goes to make up their worship, were all done out of love and reverence, not fear.

Which of these views is correct? There is no possibility of ever proving that one is right and the other wrong. It seems more reasonable to suppose that both causes entered into the development. Some individuals may have held only fear for theirs. But by far the greater number of people

would probably have to confess to the presence of both motives. While wishing to give some tangible expression of his love and respect, it would be perfectly natural if a man should also think, in the same moment, that some sort of an offering might also serve to turn aside any evil designs which the ancestral spirit might have, and thus make his offering under the compulsion of both motives. This seems more probable than that either one of the two, exclusive of the other, should be responsible for the origin of the practice now so prevalent and deep-seated in the life of oriental peoples.

At any rate the practice is as old as Japanese history. The early introduction of Chinese civilization, the basis of which was ancestor worship, served to strengthen the hold of the custom which had already grown up. This hold was so strong that even the power of Buddhism, which was naturally antagonistic to it, had to submit to it. As yet western culture and Christianity have had little effect upon it. Today nearly all Japanese people, Shintoists and Buddhists alike are ancestor worshippers. The only movement which has not yielded to its pressure is Christianity. Since the percentage of Christians is still small, the practice is still the rule. It is the universal practice of Buddhist and Shintoists alike at the present time. It underlies the whole religious and political system of Japan. As a sect of Shinto, recognized as such by the government, Konko-kyo acquiesces in the whole

system. What is officially recognized and acquiesced in by the church, the members practice, in common with all other Shintoists and Buddhists.

Let us first examine the system in general and then point out any peculiarities or irregularities which Konko-kyo may possess.

In Japan there are three categories into which the worshipped ancestors may be divided. These are, The Imperial Ancestors, The Clan Ancestors, and Family Ancestors. The worship of the Imperial Ancestors is the national cult. The worship of Clan Ancestors is local, being the concern of the clans or descendants of the clans as a class. The worship of the Family Ancestor is purely a household affair. In every Japanese house, (with the exception of the homes of the Christians and a very few others) there is a God-shelf (Kamidana) which is a simple wooden shelf on the wall. This is connected with the worship of the First Imperial Ancestor, the Sun-Goddess (Ama-terasu-Omi-Kami), and the local Ujigami (Clan god or tutelary god of the community) and sometimes with the worship of other deities whom that particular household may choose especially to worship. Then in addition to the God-shelf there is, in Shinto homes, a second shelf connected with the worship of the Family Ancestor. In the Buddhist home the "Butsudan" takes the place of this second shelf in the Shinto home. These two shelves in the home are the sacred precincts for the private worship of the Imperial, Clan, and



Family Ancestors. The public places of worship are the shrines dedicated to the spirits of the ancestors.

### 1. Worship of Imperial Ancestors

The worship of the Imperial Ancestors centers in that of the first of them, namely the Sun-Goddess. There are three places dedicated to her worship. These are the famous shrine at Ise, the "Kashikodokoro" in the Imperial Palace and the God-shelf in the home. In each of these places there is a physical emblem of the spirit of the Sun Goddess. In the Ise shrine this emblem is a mirror (Yata-no-Kagami), which is purported to have been handed down by the Goddess with the injunction that it be looked upon as a symbol of her spirit and worshipped as herself. This was at first worshipped in the Imperial Household, but was later transferred to a shrine especially constructed for it to protect it from becoming too commonplace. After several subsequent moves it was finally enshrined at Ise where it has remained ever since. Thus this shrine has become the headquarters for the cult. To this shrine many people consider it their duty to make at least one pilgrimage during their lifetime.

The emblem in the Kashikodokoro at the Imperial Palace is a duplicate of the original Mirror which the Emperor had made so that he and his successors might continue to worship it as formerly.

The emblem on the God-shelf in the home is a part of the offering made at the great shrine at Ise. Once a year every home receives a small portion of an offering which has been made to the Sun Goddess at the main shrine. This is placed on the Kamidana and becomes for the next year, or until another is received, the emblem of her spirit and is worshipped as such.

These three places, the Ise shrine (Daijingu), the Kashikodokoro and the Kamidana in the home all are dedicated to the worship of the First Imperial Ancestor, the Great Sun Goddess. In the Imperial Palace, besides the Kashikodokoro there are two other shrines. To the west of the Kashikodokoro stands the Kworei-den, dedicated to the worship of all of the Imperial Ancestors since the first Emperor and founder of the Empire, Jimmu Tenno. On the other side is the Shinden, dedicated to the worship of all the other deities.

During the year there are sixteen days which in a broad sense are national festival days, ten of which are devoted to the worship of Imperial Ancestors.

These sixteen are:

1. January 1, New Year's Day, at which the Emperor performs the ceremony of "worshipping in Four Directions" (Shihohai). The First Imperial Ancestor, the Sun Goddess, is worshipped toward the west, then the east, then worship is directed toward the graves of the Emperor Jimmu Tenno and the Imperial Father Komei Tenno respectively, and lastly in the direction of the other Deities.

2. January 3, Genshi-sai. This is the festival of the "Sacrifice of the Origin" and, like the first one, is conducted by the Emperor in person. This takes place in the three shrines, spoken of above, in the Sanctuary of the Palace. This is attended by the members of the Imperial Household and certain high officials. In the afternoon the nobility and higher officials worship at the three shrines.

3. January 5, the New Year Banquet (Shinnen Enkwai). This festival has no relation to Ancestor worship.

4. February 11, "Kigen setsu." This is the celebration of the accession of Jimmu Tenno and the foundation of the Empire. After the ceremony the princes, nobles, high officials and foreign ministers are banqueted.

5. March 10, "Rikugun Kinembi," in honor of the soldiers who died during the Russo-Japanese war.

6. March 20, "Shunki Kworei Sai." Spring sacrifice to the spirits of the Imperial Ancestors. This is performed by the Emperor personally. It is attended by all the High Officials of State.

7. April 3, "Jimmu Tenno Sai." This is the anniversary of the death of the first Emperor and is devoted to the worship of him alone.

8. April 13, "Yasu Kuni Jinja Sai." A ceremony in commemoration of all soldiers who have died for their country.

9. May 27, "Kaigun Kinembi," in honor of the sailors who died during the Russo-Japanese war.



10. June 25, the birthday of the Empress. This is celebrated at the Palace.

11. August 31, "Shinsho sai," the Emperor's birthday. On this day there is a celebration in the Palace only.

12. September 23, "Shuki Kworei Sai," the Autumn sacrifice to the spirits of the Imperial Ancestors.

13. October 17, "Shinsho Sai." At this festival the first fruits of the season are offered, together with an offering of silk, to the first Imperial Ancestor, the Sun Goddess. On the same day she is also worshipped at Ise.

14. October 31, The Emperor's birthday. This day is celebrated throughout the nation.

15. November 3, "Meiji Jingu Sai," the newly established festival in honor of the recent Emperor Meiji Tenno.

16. November 23, "Shinsho Sai," the chief feature of this festival is the offering of new crops to the Imperial Ancestors.

It will be noticed that of these sixteen general festival days, ten are related to the worship of Imperial Ancestors. Most of these are conducted personally by the Emperor who is their living descendant. This is the national worship of Japan. On all of these festival days, throughout the Empire cities, towns and country are gaily decorated, the most prominent decoration being the rising sun flag. On these days the people throughout the country remember the Imperial Ancestors and worship them.

Schools have a holiday but in the morning the pupils assemble in the presence of the portraits of the Emperor and Empress and listen to the reading of the Imperial Rescript on Education, and its explanation by the teachers. Then they are dismissed to go out to enjoy the merry-making.

Nor is it only the Ancient Imperial Ancestors that are worshipped. One of the most significant events in recent years was the dedication of the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo in 1920. This shrine had been under construction for six years. The cost of building, including a great deal of voluntary labor, is estimated at \$20,000,000. This money and labor was contributed voluntarily by the people throughout the country. At the dedication there was a three-day celebration during which time the city was thronged with pilgrims from all parts of the country who came to witness the installation of the spirit of the late Emperor in his shrine. It was estimated that as many as six hundred thousand people were gathered at one time in the shrine and surrounding courts.

The dedication ceremony was performed in the presence of more than two thousand priests and officials. The chief feature of the service, which lasted about three hours, was the placing of the casket containing an emblematic representation of the spirit of the Emperor Meiji in the sanctuary of the shrine. There it will remain as long as the spirits of Ancestors are worshipped in Japan, and probably much longer. It is planned to make the Meiji Shrine the center of the

thought and activities of the young men of Japan. To this end the largest athletic park in the country is being constructed in the precincts.

A few days after the dedication more than eight hundred representatives of the Young Men's Associations throughout the country came to Tokyo to worship the spirit of Meiji at the new shrine. A special ceremony of worship was conducted for them. It is reported by the Shrine Bureau of the Home Department that four thousand one hundred young men, representing seventy-five Young Men's Associations, in thirty-six prefectures, took part in the construction of the shrine.

During the three festival days, and in the period immediately following, literally millions of devout people came and bowed before the shrine in worship of the newly apotheosized spirit of Meiji, the newest thing in Imperial Ancestor Worship. History alone will tell how important a place Meiji will hold in the Imperial Pantheon but the indications are that it will be a very high place.

Besides these fixed festival days, which are dedicated specifically to the worship of Imperial Ancestors, they are being worshipped continually at their public shrines and at the home shrines (Kamidana) by the people individually, both as a matter of regular devotion and upon the occurrence of unusual events. This is true not only of the common people but of the high officials of state and the members of the Imperial Family as well. When Prince Prince Atsu, second



son of the Emperor and Empress recently became of age a service was held before the Imperial Shrine and the young prince made a trip to Ise and Kyoto Shrines to announce his majority to the Imperial Ancestors. During a recent severe illness of the Emperor, his mother, at the age of sixty-three made a ten days pilgrimage, visiting the chief shrines of the country. The purpose of this trip was to pray to the Imperial Ancestors and other gods to restore the Emperor to health. For another illustration take the occasion of the "serious affair affecting the Nation and the Imperial Household" which caused so much agitation in official circles recently. The trip of the Crown Prince was being planned. Those who were so seriously opposed to this trip organized a campaign of prayer for the purpose of preventing it. Prayers to that end were offered before the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo, the Imperial Mausolea near Kyoto, where the Emperor Meiji and his Empress are buried, and before the shrine of the First Imperial Ancestor at Ise. Thus the agitators hoped, by appealing to the spirits of departed Emperors, to forestall the plans, prevent the trip abroad and avoid a terrible catastrophe.

The above are only illustrations of the way in which the Imperial Ancestors are being continually worshipped. The offerings and prayers indicate that in official circles as well as in private life, such worship is far deeper than mere respect. It is worship in the truly religious sense of the word.

## 2. Clan-Ancestor Worship

The above description is of the National religion of Japan. Besides this there is the local worship of Ancestors of the Clans. Each clan has a deified Ancestor called "Ujigamai," who is worshipped by all members of the clan. These members are called "Ujiko," children of the clan. In very early times the worship of Ujigami was carried on in the homes individually, but later there were substituted for this two or three special festival days during the year. All members of the clan attend these festivals which are held at the shrine and thus the worship of the Clan-Ancestor has become a public function. In the development of worship this clan-ancestor worship has become confused with and practically identical with that of the local tutelary God of the community. This is probably due to the fact that often the two were the same, since in early times all the members of a community belonged to the same clan.

The offerings made to these ancestral deities do not differ materially from those made to the Imperial Ancestors in the national worship, being chiefly food, drink and clothing. A sample of the prayer accompanying such offerings is quoted from Mr. Nobushige Hozumi's translation of the prayer used in the festival of the Fujiwara clan:

and the offerings hereby most respectfully presented  
are divine treasures in the form of a mirror, a sword,  
a bow, a spear, and a horse; as vestments, light cloth,

shining cloth, soft cloth (silk), course cloth (hemp); the first-fruits from the tributes of different provinces; from among the things of the blue sea, the broad-fin (large fish), narrow-fin (small fish), weeds of the deep and weeds of the shore; from among things of mountain and field, sweet herbs and pungent herbs; and tall jars filled with sake and other things all piled up like a range of mountains. These are proffered by A, the master of the sacra, as the grand offering, the peaceful offering and the full offering, and he reverently prays that the Divine Spirits may accept them peacefully.

If this be compared with the account in Part I of the offerings made to Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami, it will be seen that many of the items correspond.

The music and dances which are a part of the ceremony are also considered as offerings to the God.

The upkeep of the shrines as well as the expenses of conducting the festivals are defrayed by contributions from the members of the clan.

These clan ancestors are also worshipped privately at the god-shelf in the home.

### 3. Family-Ancestor Worship

The Ancestors of a family are worshipped by the members of the family. The occasions upon which ceremonies are held are divided into three categories.



First category. Sacrifice days (Ki-nichi). On the day of each month corresponding to the day of the death of the ancestor a ceremony is conducted in worship of him.

Second category. Sacrifice-months (Sho-tsuki). This is the day and month of each year corresponding to the day and month of the ancestor's death.

Third category. Sacrifice-years (nen-ki). This is the day and month in certain specified years, corresponding to the day and month of the ancestor's death. In Shinto households these years are usually the 1st, 5th, 10th, 20th, 30th, 40th, 50th, and 100th anniversaries. After the 100th year usually every 50th year is celebrated. In Buddhist households the years differ, being the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 13th, 17th, 23rd, 27th, 33rd, 37th, 43rd, 47th, 50th and 100th anniversaries, and thereafter every 50th as in Shinto homes.

In addition to the above three classes of days there are three specified times during the year when the spirits of ancestors are worshipped. These are the "Higan," being the spring equinoxial week and the corresponding week in autumn, and the "Bon" which is from the 15th to the 16th of July.

At all the above described times offerings are made and prayers directed to the spirits of the family ancestors. The names of the ancestors thus worshipped are written upon wooden tablets, with the date of death. These tablets occupy the second of the two sacred shelves in every home.

All of the services are conducted by priests, in the case of Shintoists in the home, and in the case of Buddhists sometimes in both home and temple.

Besides at these appointed ceremonies, individuals worship their ancestors at any time they wish. It is a common custom to worship them briefly daily in the morning before commencing the days work.

This is but a bird's-eye view of the system. Much more could be said about it. To give an adequate conception of it much more should be said. I have tried merely to sketch briefly the main features, in order to give a hint of what it is that Konko-kyo accepts and practices. If members of the Konko church differ from others, it is mostly in the matter of emphasis. The emphasis is placed chiefly on the worship of Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami, while the worship of ancestors is theoretically of secondary importance. As Mr. Sato said "we reverence our ancestors but we worship only Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami with religious faith." But the laity of Konko-kyo are not metaphysicians and what the church officially acquiesces in, the people practice. When Konko members worship their ancestors they do not make any distinction between the faith with which they do it and that with which they worship "The God of Brightness of Heaven and Earth" (Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami), although in theological circles there may be such a distinction.

Here then is the situation. A religion has sprung up which has many elements of an advanced religion. The trend of its theological teaching is in the direction of monotheism. Yet it is only a slight trend for it goes only so far as to say that it is better to worship only one God, and not all of the gods (whose reality is after all recognized). It permits and practices the worship of ancestors. Where shall we look for the reason for this inconsistency?

The reason lies partly in the inherent weakness of the religion and partly in the expediency of the situation. The inherent weakness is its failure to grasp the purely monotheistic idea. This is in all probability less the fault of the founder than of the organizers of the system. A theology which has a glimpse of a spiritual god who is the most important but not the only God is still a polytheistic theology.

But no less strong is the other reason. It would have been very difficult for the religion to have made good progress, such as its organizers desired for it, if it had not had government sanction. To have begun on an entirely independent basis, antagonistic to or even indifferent to the established and recognized religious systems would have been to court failure. And failure would probably have been the outcome, for the truth inherent in the teachings was not strong enough to carry it in the face of government or popular opposition. When the disciples of the founder met to



decide upon an organization they saw plainly the advantage of being related to Shinto, and absorbing the patriotic cult into their scheme. This would enable them to attract to their membership a large and ever increasing number of people throughout the country, who had become, or were becoming imbued with a spiritual conception of God, as a result of the leaven of Christianity, and who were yet unwilling to part with the ancient traditions of their country. There are plenty of such people in Japan. They have come into contact with Christianity. They get a partial conception of its God. It attracts them. But when they realize what the acceptance of its teachings involves, the sacrifice is too great. Christianity has no place for the worship of ancestors. To give up the worship of ancestors involves heart-rending family opposition, and often persecution, as well as often creating a conflict with government authorities. It was very plain, then, to the organizers of Konko-kyo that to embody the founder's teaching of a spiritual Father-God in a system which would embrace Ancestor-worship and have government recognition, would be the best policy. This they did, the result being a sect of Shinto governed by the previously described constitution.